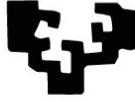


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Universidad del País Vasco Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea

WHO CONTROLS THE PRESENT CONTROLS THE PAST?

*Psychosocial effects of the Truth Commission's
evaluations and the social representations of history in
Brazil*

Anderson Mathias Dias Santos

Advisors:

Prof. Darío Páez, Ph.D. & Prof. Elza Techio, Ph.D.

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To the many victims of all kinds of authoritarianism,

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¹ I tried to write the acknowledgments in English or Spanish but I could not. This part of the thesis is written by the heart and my heart still express it poorly in languages other than Portuguese.

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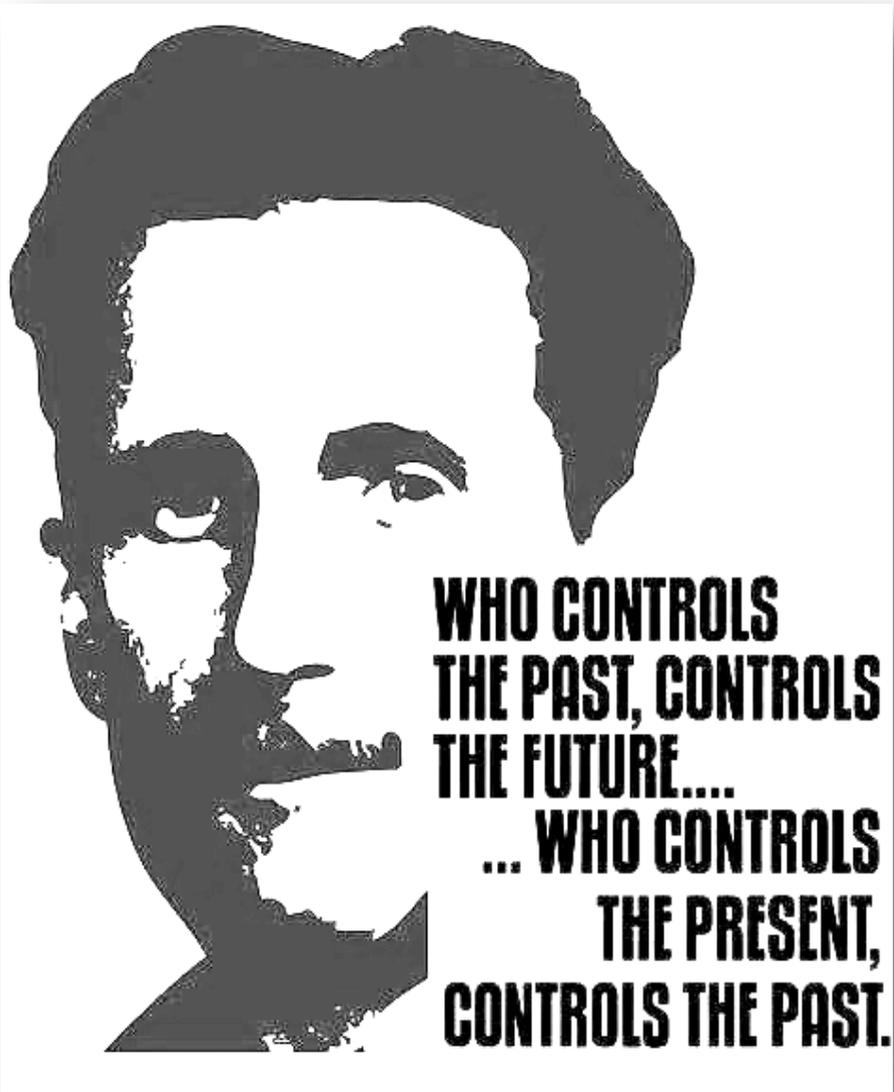
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George Orwell, 1984

Introduction

A Truth Commission was carried out in Brazil between 2012 and 2014 to investigate the human rights violations that occurred during the military regime period (1964-1985). The commission concluded that state agents tortured 1800 people and killing or disappearing with 434 (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014).

The thesis goal is to investigate the Truth Commission's perceived impact, its evaluations, and their relation with the reconstruction of social cohesion. We also aim to analyze the changes in the social representations of the authoritarian regime after the Truth Commission's work and the psychosocial variables related to a positive representation of it. Finally, another goal is to integrate this research in a meta-analysis of studies on the Truth Commissions' evaluations in other countries in South America.

The thesis is organized as follows: first, we present a theoretical review to introduce the social memory studies field; second, we provide an empirical review of studies on collective memory, social representations of history, and Truth Commissions' effects and evaluations and; third, we present the four studies we have carried out to achieve the thesis goals. In the end, we present a general discussion integrating the findings and a conclusion summarizing the thesis content and indicating future lines of research.

The theoretical review describes the psychology of memory, the collective memory paradigm, and the contribution of the social representations theory to memory studies. On the psychology of memory section, we describe the remembering processes in the individual level of analysis. We focus on those aspects and contexts

which could promote recalling or forgetting. We move towards the collective memory paradigm depicting the influence of the social frameworks in remembering and then analyzing the way societies construct a shared past and disseminate history knowledge. Finally, we outline the social representations theory emphasizing its use on social memory studies through the concept of social representations of history.

At the end of the theoretical review, we brief some essential aspects of Brazilian history and society, which are important to understand the military regime period, the following Amnesty Law, and the establishment of the Truth Commission. Firstly, we describe the aspects of Brazilian colonization that could have influenced current and past politics. Next, we introduce the official historiography as described by the National Truth Commission detailing the events which culminated in the 1964 military coup and the authoritarian regime. Finally, we depict the Brazilian Truth Commission establishment as well as the results published on its final report. In the end, we provide a brief description of the revisionist versions of the past that came out in the last years in Brazil.

We next present a review of empirical studies on collective memory, social representations of history, and the effects of Truth Commissions. Firstly, we briefly introduce the studies on the life-course approach, which investigate the social events that had the most impact on participants' lives. They generally have been showing the salience of political violence on collective memory. Moreover, they have found evidence of a cohort effect. That means people recall more

the events occurring during a certain critical age (12-30 years old). However, some events of high impact such as dictatorships and coups d'état are recalled similarly throughout cohorts.

We present, then, the studies on the collective memory of the last century events. They also confirm the centrality of politics and violence as well as the cohort effect for most of the events. Moreover, they have shown that group identification (gender, ethnicity, geographical proximity) have effects on the recalling of social events.

Next, we introduce a slightly different approach to this topic - the social representations of world-history studies. They investigate the events considered as the most important in world history, which include both recent and ancient events. These studies also have shown the centrality of politics and violence. Moreover, they observed a salience of recent events on the social representations of history and a positive bias for the evaluation of ancient events.

We also present the studies which investigated the relations between the social representations of history and current political and social issues. These studies found evidence for the use of the past by the current political figures. They also showed that changes in the social representations of history might follow the current political climate. Finally, we present some studies showing that different psychosocial variables, such as political positioning, age, and level of victimization, might be associated with different collective memories or social representations of a dictatorial past.

At the end of the empirical review, we introduce the studies investigating the Truth Commissions effects and evaluations around

the world and specifically in South America. These studies globally found that the Truth Commissions may produce adverse outcomes to the victims in terms of re-experimentation of the trauma. However, they also are associated with positive societal outcomes, such as more institutional trust and a positive socio-emotional climate. Support of transitional justice measures is associated with psychosocial variables, such as proximity to the victims (personal or ideological) and a positive attitude towards remembering the traumatic past.

After the theoretical and empirical review, we present the four studies which comprise this thesis. The first study investigated public comments about the Brazilian Truth Commission on news websites. The second study analyzed the Truth Commission impact and evaluations in Brazil across three samples: the first comprised by undergraduate students just before the commission's report release, at the end of 2014; another in 2015 with an adult sample right after the report release and; a third also with an adult sample, in 2017. The third study investigated the social representations about the military regime in Brazil and its association with psychosocial variables. Finally, in the fourth study, we carried out a meta-analysis to integrate the results we found regarding Brazilian Truth Commission impact and evaluations with the findings in other South American countries where similar researches were conducted (Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Peru).

These four studies showed that different dimensions operate in the evaluation of the Truth Commission and in representing history. In the first study, we observed that those commenting on news about the

Truth Commission report release presented extreme criticism against it. In the second study with different samples, we could verify that the evaluations expressed in online media probably do not represent overall public opinion about this topic. Political and social attitudes, as well as the emotions elicited by the Truth Commission, were found as important variables related to its evaluations. In the third study, we found associations of psychosocial variables to different emotions, attitudes, and representations about the dictatorial past. Also, we found that a positive social representation about the authoritarian past is associated with current support for authoritarianism. Finally, in the fourth study, results globally support the idea that a positive evaluation of the Truth Commissions associates with more trust in institutions and positive socio-emotional climate. We could also found associations of age and political positioning to Truth Commissions' impact and evaluations. Contextual characteristics in each society, such as level of violence perpetrated or the social trust in the government, moderated these associations.

We discuss these results based on the framework presented in the theoretical and empirical review. We draw conclusions pointing out the relation of the findings to the construction of the collective memory and social representations of history fields as well as to possible future lines of investigation.

1



Memory, Social Representations and History

Proclamation of the Republic is an 1893 oil painting on canvas by Benedito Calixto.

The picture depicts the political-military movement that occurred on November 15, 1889, which established the Republic of Brazil and, consequently, overthrew the parliamentary constitutional monarchy of the Empire of Brazil.

An anonymous search on Google Images about this event shows this picture firstly and repeatedly.

That was the first military coup to succeed in Brazilian history. However, a positive long-term bias contributes to representing it only through its positive outcomes.

The biases and processes in remembering and representing the past will be reviewed in the next chapters.

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Psychology of Memory

Memory is one of the vital human skills most studied by scholars in the 20th century. It refers to “the capacity to acquire, store and recover different kinds of knowledge and skills, (...) enduing human beings and animals with the necessary knowledge to guide their adaptive behavior independent of the situation’s complexity” (Ruiz-Vargas, 2010). There are two main traditions in memory studies, one focused on the individual processes of coding and recalling, and the other focused on the environmental aspects that can influence these processes.

The classical studies on memory: Hermann Ebbinghaus and Frederic Bartlett

The main traditions in memory studies are the study-test paradigm which has its most important contributions from Hermann Ebbinghaus (1885/2011) and Frederic Bartlett’s (1932/1995) studies about the influence of the culture on memory and the story transmissions. Both traditions had great importance in the first half of the 20th century. They presented important discoveries about the remembering process according to different situations.

Studies based on the study-test paradigm (Ebbinghaus, 1885/2011) include three stages: 1. the study time - during which the participants study a list of units (for instance, syllables, words or numbers) or learn a skill; 2. a retention interval - that can vary in duration, and; 3. the test time, i.e. the evaluation of information retaining.

Ebbinghaus' studies are classical for the use of nonsense syllables. This technique was designed to eliminate the cultural influence on participants' responses. His studies did not focus on analyzing either how the memory structure could be or its underlying processes. They aimed to verify the relations between some independent variables and the responses rate. The main results led to the discovering of the forgetting curve on the learning process. This curve shows how forgetting is relatively fast just after the learning phase, and then it decelerates.

Opposing the studies based on the study/test paradigm, Frederic Bartlett (1932/1995) defended that it was possible and essential to study memory processes through the cultural influences presented in it. He used two methods: the repeated and serial reproductions of stories. In the repeated reproduction, the same person reads a story, and then he or she has to remember it on successive occasions. On the other hand, in the serial reproduction, a chain of people tells the story from one person to another. In his studies, Bartlett could conclude that people distort the content of the stories to make it more compatible with their cultural expectations. Thus, he concluded that the remembering process is a reconstruction based on previous attitudes and their justifications (Bartlett, 1932/1995).

Bartlett's interpretation from these results was that an effort after meaning characterizes cognitive reactions to a story. When we listen to or read something, we need to get the maximum possible meaning into this material. Therefore, we fill up the gaps of the perception with previous information and memories of similar

situations. We use a rationalization process to that (Bartlett, 1932/1995).

The primary function of rationalization is to make understandable and coherent the coming material. The rationalization acts omitting or explaining the ambiguous material. Therefore, the temperament, interests, and attitudes influence the remembering process. Moreover, individuals belonging to similar social groups often present similar expectations or assumptions. A conventionalization process forms these groups' frameworks. It refers to the selective conservation of foreign material, like techniques, customs, or institutions. Therefore, the groups construct a unique culture which creates expectations that influence remembering (Bartlett, 1932/1995).

Rumors transmission: Allport and Postman classical contribution

The bias in the oral transmission of stories added to an ambiguous social climate lead to the creation and spread of rumors. A rumor is “a proposition to create, that passes from one person to another, usually orally, without ways of proof to demonstrate it” (Allport & Postman, 1947/2000). They have two underlying conditions to arise: the object of rumoring has to be important, and it has to be ambiguous. The quantity of rumor varies exponentially as these two factors vary unless the social context is authoritarian or the rumor risks punishment. Rumors of hate and hostility have the most potent effects. As the rumors spread, it tends to become more concise because it is easier to embrace and tell (Allport & Postman, 1947/2000).

Bartlett demonstrated that even the first report given directly from the stimuli font could not be considered reliable (Bartlett, 1932/1995). Rumors, by getting more and more far from the direct witness is even more fallacious. They relate to social identity acting only within a social group with a shared worldview and objectives. The suggestibility to a rumor means that a person has a proposition to believe apart from the proof. The people absorb the rumors in line with their worldview and discard those that are not. Thus, the rumors do not form new attitudes but confirm those that already exist (Allport & Postman, 1947/2000).

The classical studies on memory and rumors explain the various influences on remembering over time. However, they did not aim to explain the structure of memory or the processes that take place in this structure. Since the 1960s, many studies investigated the structure of memory and its underlying processes.

The structure of memory: sensory, short-term and long-term memories

The idea that memory works from multiple systems exists since the classical studies of William James, at the end of the 19th century. James argued that memory could be divided into primary and secondary, what it is now known as short-term and long-term memory. Nevertheless, it was especially since Richard Atkinson and Richard Shiffrin's studies in 1968 that researches aimed to describe the structures and processes that compose the skill we call memory (Ruiz-Vargas, 2010).

The model proposed by Atkinson and Shiffrin was called structural approach. It distinguishes two main dimensions on memory: its structure and its control processes. The structure is composed of three memory stores: sensory records, short-term, and long-term memory. Through this structure, people can use different control processes to control the information flow. The main control processes are five: selective attention, review, tracking, search, and codification. This model proposed an information processing order. The information first comes to the sensory stores that register it. Then, the information is transferred to short-term memory, which acts on it through a search for related information in the long-term memory. Once in the short-term memory, the information can receive enough attention to be recognized and categorized — the one which is not recognized decay in a few seconds (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968).

Nevertheless, short-term memory is limited. It is a working memory by which people can control the information through rehearsal and can maintain it available for a dozen of seconds. The more time the working memory actively maintains the information, the more likely the long-term memory can retain it. Once preserved there, the information is relatively permanent, although sometimes the recall fails. From this point, people can recall information and work consciously with it (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968).

On the other hand, the functional approach of memory proposed by Fergus Craik and Robert Lockhart argued that memory is a product from the processes occurring when the information is submitted. The attention and perception processes in the time of

codification determine which content is stored in the long-term memory opposing the perspective that sustained that the simple repetition is enough to a good storage work. This approach emphasizes two kinds of processes: maintenance rehearsal (basic) and elaborative rehearsal (resulting each time in a deeper level of analysis) (Craik & Lockhart, 1972).

The functional approach was founded on the studies of Arthur Melton that defended the existence of three phases on the memory functioning: codification, storage, and recall. The codification is the processing of coming information aiming to prepare it to later storage. It includes two processes: acquisition (inputs registers of sensorial memories and submission of this information to different analysis) and consolidation (creation of representation or memory cues becoming stronger). The second phase is the storage. It refers to the maintenance of a permanent register of the memory cues. Finally, the third phase is the recall. It is the process that allows the recovering of the storage information (Melton, 1963).

Types of memory: semantic, episodic, procedural and autobiographical

Other researches argued that the description of memory as composed of three stores is not sufficient to explain all cases of memory loss. For example, some people suffer cerebral damage and have their skill to remember past events completely damaged. However, they conserve their general knowledge about the world. Such cases led researchers such as Endel Tulving and Daniel Schacter to study the memory systems classification. They could identify three

other kinds of memory: semantic (related to the general knowledge); episodic (related to personal events) and procedural (acquired skills). These systems are not opposed to the three-store approach. We can use these different systems independently (Tulving & Schacter, 1987).

Some authors like Martin Conway and Katherine Nelson argued that we should consider one more category as a memory system: the autobiographical memory. This system could store emotionally charged memories related to the self-conscious. The difference between the autobiographical and episodic memories is that the later are specific, while the autobiographical memories are built narratively throughout one's whole life. Inside the auto-biographic system, there is a difference between the autobiographical memories and events. Autobiographical memories can be described as a re-experimentation of the original episode, while auto-biographical events are related to the knowledge of events without a clear image of the specific scene of when it happened. Studies about memory dissociation support this division, and it also supports the idea that autobiographical memory is composed of two components: episodic and semantic (Conway, 2005; Nelson, 1993).

Forgetting, trauma and false memories

Forgetting is considered from three points of view: decay, interference, or failures in the recall process. From the decay perspective, there is a difference between short and long-term forgetting. The first seems to occur as a simple consequence of the time passing by the decaying of memory traces (Ruiz-Vargas, 2010).

Related to the long-term forgetting, Ebbinghaus' studies showed that forgetting occurs in different speeds through the time, being faster just after the learning and getting slower after a day (Ebbinghaus, 1885/2000) although the information constantly used can delay or prevent the decaying process (Ruiz-Vargas, 2010).

Some authors argued that an interference process could act in forgetting. It could occur as a consequence of an overload of the retrieval cues at the recall moment (Watkins & Watkins, 1975). The interference is proactive (the old information disturbs the learning and retention of the new information), or retroactive (the new information disturbs the recalling of an old one) (Jonides et al., 2008).

Finally, the failure in the recall process can occur for many reasons, such as repression or inhibition (Ruiz-Vargas, 2010). In the case of repression, something that happens can be so shocking that the mind puts it in an inaccessible place for a long time or forever (Freud, 1915). The traumatic memories can resurge after a long time, but in many cases, they can be false, though be very real and vivid. In these cases, it seems that post-event information is incorporated into the factual memory and changes it. So, memory can be suggested (Loftus, 1993). People who suffered traumatic experiences can experience hypermnesia (painful remembering they could not suppress) or amnesia (partial or total forgetting) (Ruiz-Vargas, 2010).

Emotions have three kinds of influence on remembering: in the number of events recalled; in the subjective liveliness of the events recalled, and; in the recall accuracy (Kensinger & Schacter, 2008). The empirical evidence suggests that people remember better the emotional

events both negative and positive (Sharot & Phelps, 2004), although their effect seems to relate more with the central elements than the secondary (Christianson & Loftus, 1990). Furthermore, emotional memories are malleable by the passage of time (Vangiezen, Arensman, Spinhoven, & Wolters, 2005). In this sense, wrong post-event information could influence this kind of memories (Loftus, 1993, 2005).

Human memory in context: current approaches on the relations between memory and the social environment

The importance of the social contexts in remembering is well demonstrated since Bartlett's (1932/1995) studies. However, it could be challenging defining what a social context is (Stone & Bietti, 2016). It could be any circumstance present between the moments of encoding and recalling. Moreover, individual features also play a role. The same event in the same social background can engender different memories according to how they fit the personal narrative (Hirst & Manier, 2008) and identity (Berntsen, 2018; Hirst & Meksin, 2018). Also, emotional experimentation (Dumas, Lepastourel, & Testé, 2014; Finkenauer et al., 1998; Luminet, 2009) and differences in skills or the presence of disorders (Brown, Kouri, & Superka, 2016) are also vital aspects in remembering.

On the other hand, social representations of a topic circulating in society function as tools for remembering social events (Wertsch, 2002). Important social events usually engender a social sharing of memories (Páez et al., 2018; Páez, Valencia, Basabe, Herranz, & González, 2000) and emotions (Rimé, 2005, 2007; Rimé & Christophe,

1998; Rimé, Páez, Basabe, & Martínez-Sánchez, 2010). They are shared not only in the interpersonal communication but also in mass media (Hirst & Meksin, 2018; Hirst et al., 2015) or the internet (Garcia & Rimé, 2019). However, silencing processes could also occur at the same time (Bar-Tal, 2017; Stone, 2015).

The influence of others on memory has also been studied in a more sociological approach. This field of study was called collective memory, and Maurice Halbwachs (1925/1994, 1950/2004) is usually pointed out as the pioneer in considering memory as a collective rather than an individual process (Assmann, 2008; Hirst & Echterhoff, 2012; Schuman, Schwartz, & D'Arcy, 2005; Villas Bôas, 2015). Halbwachs' theory is based on Émile Durkheim's (1912/2008) ideas about the influence of social frameworks on the formation of a representational system. We present next, the development of this approach since Durkheim's works until current researches.

Collective memory: the social frameworks of memory

Halbwachs (1950/2004) define collective memory as: “the reconstruction of the past made by members of a group from their interests and present social frameworks.” Moreover, collective memory keeps the identity, nature, and the value of a group. Halbwachs' theory was influenced by Émile Durkheim's ideas about social frameworks.

Durkheim (1912/2008) argued that social life gives individuals the frameworks in which they organize their mental life. He studied how the elementary forms of religion arose in tribal societies.

Durkheim observed that different social organizations led to different kinds of myths and religions. In turn, these different cultures shaped distinct mental organizations, which he called collective representations.

The collective representations explain the way the world works and the role of the individual in it. They represent the accumulated knowledge, resulted from cooperation between individuals throughout generations in a group. They also provide individuals the reference points to categorize the natural and social objects. For instance, the classification of time in days, weeks, months, and years reflects the periodicity of the public rituals, parties, and ceremonies (Durkheim, 1912/2008).

Rituals as forms of creation and maintenance of collective representations

The rituals have an essential role in the emergence and maintenance of collective representations. They aim to evoke certain mental states that are not possible to be reached by an individual alone. The gathering leads to the experimentation of social feelings, and these feelings lead to the construction of collective representations. Thus, societies need rituals to remain. They maintain the shared beliefs, helping to keep society cohesion. As long as the shared beliefs are founded on social feelings and traditions, they are impermeable to the experience (Durkheim, 1912/2008). Collective memory implies shared beliefs about the past of a group. The rituals appear as one of the main tools for the creation and maintenance of these beliefs.

Characteristics of the collective memory by Halbwachs

In Halbwachs (1950/2004) perspective, the collective memory only remains while the members of a group are alive. In this sense, the groups do not forget, but they perish, i.e., their members die, and so do the memories held by them. However, even when the members of a group that lived an event are still alive, the past is interpreted through the current frameworks.

The broad social consensus about a past event is established by the older generations who lived it and appropriated by the younger generations who not. Also, when generations change, the need to tell the history of the past generation increases. The contact between generations allows young people to construct an image and have opinions about a past that they did not live. Thus, there is an interruption between people who read or listen to history (people who are alive) and who had lived history (Halbwachs, 1950/2004).

Halbwachs (1950/2004) also defended that collective memory is different from history. The later is related to a compilation of events that has more importance to collective memory. However, this compilation has limited space. Halbwachs made an analogy between history and a cemetery. He said that history seems like a cemetery because space is limited, and every time it is necessary to find a place for new tombs. Therefore, history only registers abrupt time-changes and their repercussions while forgets extensive periods of relative stability. Differently from the official history knowledge that has to be consensual and coherent, societies can retain two kinds of memories, one about the winners and rulers, and the others about the losers. The

loser's memories stay as minority memories, waiting an opportunity to be rescued and become visible, maybe becoming part of the official history (Halbwachs, 1950/2004).

Collective memory and alternative concepts

Throughout the last decades, many concepts have arisen as alternatives or complement to collective memory (see Hirst, Yamashiro, & Coman, 2018; Wertsch, 2010). Many authors have their way to categorize these similar concepts. For instance, some consider social memory as the registers and traces of the past that are virtually available to anyone in museums, libraries, monuments, and cultural manifestations – these registers could also be called “memory in the society” or “cultural memory” (Jedlowski, 2000). Others, on the contrary, believe that social memory and collective memory are synonymous, and we should use cultural memory as a broader concept chosen to describe "the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts" (Erll, 2008). Finally, there are those who argue that social memory is a proper concept to describe all the studies addressing the social aspects of memory, and hence may be more adequate because it relates easily with a dynamic perspective of memory, stressing its continuous construction and reconstruction, as well as its disputes for hegemony (Olick, 1999; De Rosa, Bellelli, & Bakhurst, 2008). To avoid confusion, the descriptions for the concepts adopted in this thesis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Conceptual definitions in the field of social memory*

Construct	Definition
Social Memory	Broader concept to refer to the studies about the relations between memory and society (Olick, 1999; De Rosa, Bellelli, & Bakhurst, 2008).
Collective or Communicative Memory	The product of a reconstruction of the past events that were lived by current members of a group (Assmann, 2008; Halbwachs, 1950/2004; Hirst et al., 2018).
Culture	A set of beliefs, values, practices, and traditions inherited that provide a given group a sense of identity (Langenbacher, 2010).
Cultural Memory	Registers and traces of the past available to consult (Assmann, 2008; Jedlowski, 2000).
History	A discourse unifying and legitimating the conjunct of collective memories (Namer, 1987).
Social Representations of History, of the Past or Historical Memory	A broad consensus as to what events and figures are important in constituting a group's history (Liu & Hilton, 2005).
Sites of memory	Places where groups of people engage in public activity through which they express a collective shared knowledge of the past, on which a group's sense of unity and individuality is based (Assmann, 1995; Nora, 1984).
Public Commemoration	An activity defined by the gestures and words of those who come together at sites of memory to recall particular aspects of the past (Winter, 2008).

Cultural memory

The concept of cultural memory arisen in the 1980s. In this decade, many Holocaust survivors started to fade away, and many people started to worry about their legacy and their stories, which should be remembered. Without autobiographical remembering, societies depend on media, such as monuments, places, or books to transmit experience (Assmann, 2008). Cultural memory studies in the 1980s relied mainly on the works of Pierre Nora about the sites of memory and Jan and Aleida Assmann about media and memory in ancient societies (Erl, 2008).

Cultural memory is different from collective memory because the later is not materialized in the society but the consciousnesses of the people. In this sense, cultural memory gets stronger as time passes while collective memory weakens (Esposito, 2008). Every cultural memory has its public and aims to transmit a message. The public is all the people who have access to the memory trace or, even when it can be openly accessed, people who virtually have an interest in the subject (Namer, 1987). These traces are present when a person, moved by his/her own interest, goes to consult it and takes possession of it. In modern societies, the techniques of observing the traces of the past have been producing an enlargement of cultural memory, though these memories appear now more fragmented and circumstantial (Jedlowski, 2000).

Cultural remembering can be active and passive (Assmann, 2008). Active cultural memory is the working memory of a society. The elements that comprise it passed a rigorous process of selection.

There are three main areas of active cultural memory: art, history, and religion. In history, for instance, the narratives produced by the Nation-States are taught massively to the new generations, moreover being reinforced by monuments, rituals and commemoration dates. This process is vital to the maintenance of national identity. The passive remembering refers to the archives maintained somewhat hidden from most people. The tools of storage have been playing an essential role in the relations between active and passive kinds of cultural memory. An introduction of new technology, such as the printed book or the internet, can be considered a tragedy for the culture, in the sense that increases dramatically the difference between what is stored and what can be actively remembered by the members of a society (Assmann, 2008).

The process of storage and its eventual consulting by people are part of a double relationship between collective memory and history (Namer, 1987). The storage of objects in museums, the maintenance of monuments in the cities, the choice of books to comprise a public library, are part of a choice, based on a dispute to construct a legitimate history of the group. All these traces tell a history of the group where some aspects, happenings, and emotions are stressed and others hidden. In this sense, history is a discourse unifying and legitimating the conjunct of collective memories. However, the choices are not definitive. History is continuously actualized by the current individuals of a society every time they access cultural memory objects (Namer, 1987). This process is carried out through plenty of negotiations and

conflicts, being influenced by social identities and the current objectives of the groups (Langenbacher, 2010).

Sites of memory and public commemorations

Sites of memory are places to remember the memories of others. They have a pedagogic function of learning from the past human rights violations in order to not repeat them. They are also places to express the different interpretations of the past reinforce some of them and changing others (Jelin & Langland, 2003). When the groups that maintain the public activity in a site of memory disappear, this site loses its force and may fade away (Winter, 2008). The sites of memory need an engaged public activity to remain relevant to society. They are points of reference for those who born after the event. The sites of memory are established in two phases: a creative, when they are constructed or adapted to particular commemorative purposes and an institutionalization phase, which associates particular places and forms of remembrances with specific days (Nora, 1984).

Public commemorations or collective rituals often take place in sites of memory (Winter, 2008). They imply a recall of a significant moment lived by members of a group which contains a moral message. Sites of memory serve to materialize that message. In the cases there is no consensus about the nature of the event, its causes or the moral message that should be learned from it (for instance Vietnam War in the United States or Algerian War in France), it is more challenging to construct sites of memory and public commemoration rituals.

Public commemorations need to stay linked to daily life; otherwise, it will fade away (Winter, 2008). The vanishing of a site of memory does not mean that it is disappeared forever. It can resurge if the social conditions enable it. In order to remain active in a society, public commemorations have to: be relevant to social identity; have provoked a significant social change or threatened the group identity; be emotionally charged; be commemorated in rituals, institutional and informal communications (Páez, Bobowik, De Guissmé, Liu, & Licata, 2016).

Moreover, commemorations have to serve current needs and actual objectives. Collective rituals are especially useful in maintaining collective identities. They remember the event through a repetitive re-activation of the cognitive representation. The shared focalization of attention on the symbolic object and the synchronicity of behaviors, expressive gestures, slogans, songs and music, lead to a social sharing of emotions and feeling coordination or synchrony (so-called perceived emotional synchrony), that strength fusion identity elements (Páez, Rimé, Basabe, Włodarczyk, & Zumeta, 2015).

Collective remembering involves continuous talking and thinking about the event in society. These processes are related to the emotional impact of the events. The episodes with more significant emotional impact lead to more social sharing and repetitive thoughts about them (Pennebaker & Basanick, 1998).

There are two hypotheses regarding the creation and maintenance of commemoration rituals: generational resources and psychological distance. The generational resources hypothesis

proposes that the generations that lived a traumatic social event during their youth do not have material resources and political influence to promote commemorations immediately after the events. Only decades later, they would have the opportunity to do it. On the other hand, the psychological distance hypothesis proposes that, in cases of very traumatic events, some time would be necessary until people be able to face the past event and think about it to build monuments or rituals for commemoration (Pennebaker & Basanick, 1998).

Generations and collective memory

A generation can be defined as “a group within a society that is characterized by its members having grown up in the same particularly formative historical era” (Reulecke, 2008, p. 119). In the first half of the 20th century, Karl Mannheim (1952) developed the idea that different generations are marked by different social issues, thus having a different social consciousness. Therefore, a generation, that was affected in a particular way by an event or a social period could exhibit resistance against the official history (Mannheim, 1952; Reulecke, 2008). Generational theories helped the development to the critical age hypothesis which affirms that the events occurred when people are between 12 and 25 years old are more remembered because that it is a formative period for the identity (Schuman et al., 1998).

Assmann’s shared memories typology

Summarizing the knowledge on social memory issues, Jan Assmann (2008) developed a typology which comprises five kinds of

shared memories classified by their grade of generalization and acceptance. The less generalized and accepted are the communicative memories, i.e., the interpersonal conversations. Then there are the generational memories, which mean the memories shared by a specific generation. In a central place are the collective memories that exist in a period and run through different generations. Next, the cultural memories, that are hegemonic memories ritualized in a society. Finally, the most generalized and accepted are the myths (memories with no resistance which serve to maintain the social identity and are difficult to prove) (J. Assmann, 2008).

From collective memory to social representations of history

Such as collective memory, social representation is a concept that has its origin linked with Durkheim's ideas about the collective representations and some of Bartlett's ideas about the social influences on memory. Serge Moscovici, the founder of social representations theory, defended that Durkheim's concept of collective representation was not an adequate concept to analyze modern societies that are fluid and change continuously (Moscovici, 1961/2012). Therefore, while collective representations are related to the static elements which maintain traditional societies cohesive, social representations theory aims to analyze the points of tension on the representational systems that generate changes in the social organization (Moscovici, 2009). These points of tension arise when something unfamiliar, unknown, or meaningless appear and become relevant. A representational work takes place to make the un-familiar meaningful. This idea is similar to

the effort after meaning in Bartlett's (1932/1995) work. In this way, every social representation aims to transform something un-familiar or the non-familiarity into something familiar.

The Social Representations Theory

A social representation is defined as:

“A system of values, ideas, and practices with a double function: first, establish an order that allows people to guide themselves in the material and social world and control it; and, second, allows that communication be possible between the members of a community, giving them a code to name and classify, without ambiguity, the various aspects of their world and their individual and social history” (Moscovici, 2009, p.21).

The social representations theory allows analyzing the action in context and at the time it occurs (Farr, 1996). For example, Moscovici's (1961/2012) and Denise Jodelet's (1991) classical works about the social representations of psychoanalysis and madness respectively are examples of social representations emergence, transmission, transformation and their relations with the social behavior. All these features are related, but sometimes, what is said about a social object is different from the behavior related to it (Jodelet, 1991). One relevant aspect of social representations approach is the idea that lay beliefs (e.g., social representations of history or naive psychological folk concepts) are the active assimilation of

expert's theories (e.g., official historiography or psychoanalysis) through daily life conversations and communicative interactions.

Social representations genesis and communication strategies

Social representations construction and evolution rely on communicative processes (Sammut, Tsirogianni, & Wagoner, 2012). In his seminal work "La psychanalyse, son image et son public," Moscovici distinguished three kinds of communication about a new object: diffusion, propagation, and propaganda. Diffusion is related to opinions, propagation to attitudes, and propaganda to stereotypes. Diffusion aims to inform and to attract the interest to an object. It allows diversity and challenges consensus (e.g., different complementary historiographies about national heroes, martyrs, and events). Propagation aims to assimilate the object into a group frame pressing for uniformity. It is more linked to the attitudes and belief systems (e.g., official historiography that constructs a national identity). Finally, propaganda is more ideological and centralized. It seeks to impose uniformity on both, social representations and behaviors, like official proclamations and national rituals, anthems, and patriotic commemorations aimed to build an appositive attitude towards fighting for the motherland (De Rosa, 2013). Different groups can adopt different communication patterns depending on their openness to alternative opinions about the object (Sammut, Andreouli, Gaskell, & Valsiner, 2015).

Social representations are constructed through three kinds of processes: ontogenesis, sociogenesis, and microgenesis. Ontogenetic

processes regard to the developing of individuals regarding existing social representations. That means how these representations become active for the individual. Sociogenetic processes refer to the way social representations evolve, are transmitted, change, and interact with one another in society. Finally, microgenesis refers to the elaborations and reproduction of social representations at an interpersonal level, in social interaction (Duveen & Lloyd, 1990).

Social representations processes: anchoring and objectification

The social representations are structured by two processes that act intra-individually on the transformation of the un-familiar in familiar: anchoring and objectification (see Moscovici, 2009). The anchoring process tries to reduce the strange ideas to common categories in order to put them in a familiar context. The strange object is compared to one of the existent categories, and, at the same time, it is transformed to fit in it. The category provides an appropriate model or prototype to represent the class. For instance, a more recent war or attacks could be anchored in a past warfare experience, and as a result, people could appraise (for example) the 9/11 attacks as Pearl Harbor, and Saddam Hussein as Hitler. These prototypes favor existing opinions. Before seeing or listening to someone, we judge him or her (Moscovici, 2009). This process is similar to the described in rumor spreading (Allport & Postman, 1947/2000).

On the other hand, the objectification process aims to transform a concept that is abstract in a concrete image. Historical events may be reincarnated in figures (e.g., Hitler representing the

Nazi evil) and images (e.g., Columbus's three ships as a figurative image of the "Discovery"). However, not all concepts can be transformed into images because there are not enough available images or some of the images remembered are taboos (Moscovici, 2009).

Anchoring and objectification are conceived off as mainly intra-individual characteristics of the social representation (but see Wagner & Hayes, 2005 for a social approach to these processes). Moscovici stressed that social representations are created not by a single individual but throughout the communication. Once created, they acquire other characteristics. They live by themselves. By this time, they pervade every kind of communication serving as tools to understanding and to the formation of concepts and shared conventions (Moscovici, 2009).

The relations between individual and society: social representations and social identity

Although the processes of anchoring and objectification are intra-individual processes, the social representations theory has been pointed out as an oppositional force to merely individualistic psychosocial concepts such as attitude, which could be conceived as the effect of inter-subjective processes and a result of the internalization of cultural values (Gaskell, 2001).

The social representations could be considered as both, an individual schema to understand a subject or an object that circulates in a society, being used and modified to reach political or social goals (Moscovici, 1961/2012). As an object, the social representations exist across individuals rather than in an individual (Wagner & Hayes,

2005) and as a theory it could be positioned in all levels of analysis from intrapersonal to ideological (Doise, 2002). They are related to the social identity, contributing to individuals social positioning and the negotiation of a shared frame of reference in social interaction (Duveen & Lloyd, 1990). Group belonging lead individuals to assimilate the norms, beliefs and the representational system of the group (Duveen, 2008) and social representations helps to guide the social interaction between individuals within the group (Sammut & Howarth, 2014).

The social representations are elaborated and discussed in the context of “battle of ideas” (Moscovici, 1998). The various groups in society try to impose their ideas, some are successful, and some are not (Howarth, 2001). When exposed to new ideas, people interpret them as agreeing or disagreeing with their previous representations (Moscovici, 1994). This interpretation can influence the disposition to hear the message and to interact with the people or groups who share these ideas (Wagner & Hayes, 2005).

Science, common-sense and social representations

Social representations theory is based on the idea that common sense is a valuable way to understand reality (Moscovici, 1984). Moscovici abandoned the distinction made by Durkheim between the profane and sacred ways of thinking and affirmed that, in modern societies, there is a more fundamental distinction between the consensual and reified universes (Moscovici, 2009). In the consensual universe, society is considered as a group of equal people where

everyone has the right to speak, and the speech given by anyone has the same value. There is no hierarchy. The conventions determine what could be spoken. This universe depends on the conversations which create a base of meanings shared by people in a group. Thus, they can share the implicit storage of images and ideas that are considered well accepted. Everything that is said confirms the existent beliefs, supporting and not contradicting tradition.

On the other hand, in the reified universe, or expert's system of beliefs, like such as science, society is considered an unequal system where every person belongs to a category or class and should play a different role according to his class. The competence acquired determines the degree of participation in this meritocratic system. In this system, clashes occur all the time. The clashes are not between people, but it is between existent organizations, each of them with their particular rules and regulation. It is not the direct agreement between the members that establish these rules but a series of previous prescription (Moscovici, 2009). Therefore, reified knowledge refers to any knowledge considered as official knowledge; for instance, science, an art movement, religion, or ideology. The representation work aims to transform the reified knowledge into more accessible and familiar knowledge.

As society changes, the ways through which the common sense access and transform the reified knowledge change. The mass media have accelerated the tendency to the heterogeneity of knowledge and weakened the unifying systems: sciences, religions, and ideologies. Thence, there could be many social representations to explain a single

object instead of a single system which provide all the explanations such as a religion or an ideology (Moscovici, 1961/2012).

As a result, the sciences were established as the means through which we can understand the reified universe while the social representations are connected with the consensual universe. Social representations explain the objects and happenings in a way that they become accessible to everyone and concur with our immediate interests. Usually, people prefer the common-sense explanation. They often make misleading associations that even the presentations of objective facts are unable to correct. They distort the information in order to assimilate the facts that confirm their beliefs and ignore the rest (Moscovici, 2009). These differences between distinct modalities of knowledge such as science and social representations, do not lead to an inevitable choice between one of them. They often coexist in the same individual in a state name cognitive polyphasia (de-Graft Aikins, 2012; Jovchelovitch & Priego-Hernández, 2015; Provencher, Arthi, & Wagner, 2012).

Status of a social representation: hegemonic, emancipated and polemic

Once created and circulating in society, social representations can acquire one of three statuses: hegemonic, emancipated, and polemic. Hegemonic social representations are shared by all members of a society and support minimal variation. They are similar to collective representations (i.e., official national memory and historiography, like the myth of dominant French “Resistance” to German occupation during WWII). Emancipated social representations

are common in subgroups in a society that creates their interpretation of reality.

These representations present individual variations but these variations refer to the degree of exposure to the group (i.e., French Communist Party - the “Party of 100.000 fusillés”- representation of popular French resistance that coexists with the Gaullist nationalist view of French Resistance in WWII). Finally, polemical representations are in dispute. They are usually present in intergroup conflicts. For instance, in the 1980s in France emerge historiography and works of art like fictions and no fiction books, that colludes and breaks the myth of dominant French Resistance to Nazi occupation and recall the massive collaboration of French administrations and people with the Nazi regime (Breakwell, 2015).

Different approaches to social representations theory

Many approaches were developed to analyze the different aspects of social representations. The structure of social representations is usually studied using the structural approach in which the social representations are considered as organized in a dual system comprised of a core and a periphery. The core determines the general meaning of social representation. It seeks the stability of the representations, and so it is hard to change. The core of social representations is related to the stable nucleus of collective memory – the hegemonic shared beliefs or social representations about the past. On the other hand, the periphery is comprised of elements linked to the central core but more malleable and adapt to changing realities. It

protects the central system from abrupt changes. It is related to emancipated representations (Abric, 2001; Flament, 1989).

Other approaches to the study of social representations are socio-dynamic, dialogical, anthropological, and modelling. The socio-dynamic approach is focused on the role of organizing principles for representational processes. They represent common reference points to the discussion of social issues, and they vary according to individual positioning (Doise, Clémence, & Lorenzi-Cioldi, 1993). The dialogical approach focuses on the relations between individual social representations in contact with others representation and processes of social change (Marková, 2000). The anthropological approach seeks to investigate the social representations within the context in which they occur. Jodelet's (1991) study about the social representations of madness is an example of research on this approach. Finally, the modelling approach is based on the integration of various concepts and methods to achieve a comprehensive picture of the phenomena analyzed (De Rosa, 2014).

Social representations of history and conflicts

History, like any science, can be an object of appropriation and transformation by common sense. The social representations theory provides a framework to understand how this process occurs (Hirst et al., 2018). There are at least two main traditions on studying the social representations of history: the study of the elaboration of these representations, and the analysis of the relations between the

representations of history and political issues. These studies are analyzed more in-depth in the empirical review.

The social representations of history provide societies with myths of origin, narratives, and charters for future actions (Hilton & Liu, 2017; Liu & Hilton, 2005). These narratives are related to the groups' identity (László & Ehmann, 2013). Understanding the relations between these narratives and intergroup processes helps to understand the public uses of the past by different groups in contexts of conflict. The historical narratives have three main functions: keep track of which ones are the group friends or the enemies; maintain sources of collective pride dealing with the collective shame or guilt and provide lessons or charters for the future actions (Hilton & Liu, 2008).

In contexts of conflict, the social representations of history are based on "elected traumas" (Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2011; Bar-Tal, 2007). They are often responsible for an emotional orientation on which fear and hate towards the out-group raise from a constant feeling of threatening. These feelings are reinforced on each ritual that remembers the deaths that the group has suffered while forgetting the suffering of the other group. The narrative originated in this process, justifies its demands while delegitimizing those from the other group.

Summarizing, the social representations of history in the context of conflicts serve to: explain and justify the outbreak of the conflict; present the in-group in a positive light; delegitimize the out-group and; justify aggression against the enemies (Rosoux, 2001).

Social representations of history and social identity

Finally, the social representations of history are related to in-group social identity and intergroup relations. The knowledge of a social event that was not personally experienced is collectively created and shared, fulfilling social functions (Schuman & Scott, 1989). These representations are elaborated, transmitted, and conserved by a group through interpersonal and institutional communication (Jedlowski, 2000; Olick & Robbins, 1998). The representations of history help to preserve a sense of continuity, a positive image of the in-group, and to feed values and norms that prescribe behaviors and help to define group membership (Liu & Hilton, 2005; Pennebaker, Páez, & Rimé, 1997).

Collective memory fulfills various functions concerning social identity (Klein, Licata, Van der Linden, Mercy, & Luminet, 2012). First, collective memories contribute to the group's definition. According to Liu and Hilton (2005: 537),

“History provides us with narratives that tell us who we are, where we came from, and where we should be going. It defines a trajectory which helps construct the essence of a group's identity, how it relates to other groups, and ascertains what its options are for facing present challenges”.

Social representations of history provide content to social identity. Besides, these representations have a normative function. They serve as “charters” that define how individuals in a group should behave and react to a current situation (Liu & Hilton, 2005). These

charters are based on the lessons learned from past conflicts.

Beyond these cognitive and normative aspects, the simple fact that those representations are shared brings a sense of cohesion among group members. Thus, this imagined past simultaneously creates ‘horizontal’ solidarity between contemporary group members and ‘vertical’ solidarity with past and future members of the group. Therefore, representing the group as continuous through time facilitates identification with it (Sani et al., 2007). On the other hand, the perception of discontinuity could be related to collective anxiety about the future (Jetten & Wohl, 2012; Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2015).

Moreover, shared representations of history contribute to set the group’s value. Social groups thus compare their respective pasts and generally strive to derive a positive sense of their identity through this comparison. A group’s past - its successes and failures; its moral or immoral actions – hence contribute to defining its relative value. That helps to explain why these representations are often biased towards positive accounts of the in-group’s past or negative accounts of out-groups’ actions in history (Baumeister & Hastings, 1997). Also, reminders of past misdeeds may elicit strong defensive reactions (Branscombe, 2004). In this sense, social representations of history are also used for legitimizing past, current, or planned in-group actions. For instance, Serb nationalists referred to memories of the Kosovo battle in 1389, after which the Serbs had lost control over the Kosovar territory, in order to legitimize the deportation of Muslim Kosovars in the 1990s.

Finally, the social representations of history are used to

mobilize members of a social group to accomplish a particular collective project in the name of their shared identity (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). For instance, the Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba adapted his discourse as a function of the audience he was addressing: in front of a Congolese audience, he would represent the history of colonization as undermined by the Belgians' cupidity and contempt whereas, in front of a Belgian audience, he would emphasize the friendship that the colonial experience had allowed to build between the two nations. Far from being a simple example of opportunism, this apparent lack of coherence reflected a stable political project, which demanded different actions from different actors. Hence, he had to mobilize the Congolese against the paternalistic colonial ideology, as well as make sure that the Belgians would collaborate with the new independent State (Klein & Licata, 2003).

Truth Commissions: Overcoming a past of collective violence

Along with the transition from a violent period to a peaceful one, there is a necessity to come to terms with the past (Rosoux, 2001). Competing representations of the past are publicly discussed and negotiated. If perpetrators or their supports still hold influential positions in a post-authoritarian society, so the government is pressured towards impunity. On the other side, the victims and their supporters will do not accept this government and, hence, the new democracy is in danger because of the lack of legitimacy (Meyer, 2007).

After hostilities have ceased or the dictatorship has been replaced by a democracy, there are essential steps to historical reconciliation (Páez & Liu, 2011). First, the acceptance of different meanings about the collective violence which allows the two sides to begin to acknowledge one another. Second, it is important to remember what happened but not maintaining hatred. What is important is to acknowledge the reality of crimes and victims, “to keep it from happening again...” but to forget the emotions of hate and not awakening ancient sufferings in order to justify future crimes. The final step to reconciliation is the creation of an inclusive narrative that describes different meanings, experiences, and perspectives of the past in a single story. One example of reconstruction is the current representation of both world wars in the official German and French memory. The social representations of great battles of WWI (like Verdun) were patriotic on both German and French sides as a manifestation of heroism, glory, and the fighting spirit of the combatant. At the end of the 20th century, battles like Verdun became a symbol of mutual slaughter, with similar meaning for combatants on both sides. This representation was enacted symbolically when Mitterrand and Kohl, the French president and German prime minister, stood hand in hand in front of a French ossuary of dead soldiers (Páez & Liu, 2011).

Truth Commissions are one of the instances of co-construction of shared factual social representations of history. They may be useful for coping with the violations committed in authoritarian regimes (Langenohl, 2008). The term Truth and Reconciliation Commission

surged in South Africa, has been used in many other countries which passed through a similar process after authoritarian regimes. There have been more than 50 official Truth Commission established around the world since the 1970s (see Avruch, 2010; Hayner, 2011).

These commissions were designed because of the impossibility of coping with the violations relying only on the conventional justice processes. This impossibility relies mainly on the challenge of integrating a divided conflictive society, the victims, perpetrators, and supporters of both sides and, at the same time, do justice to victims and sometimes prosecute perpetrators. The objective of these commissions is less the persecution of the perpetrators or the compensation of the victims but to establish a cornerstone to a democratic order (Hayner, 2011).

However, at the same time Truth Commissions provides opportunities for disclosure of past mistakes they may also threaten a new democratic order provoking hostility and division (Allen, 1999). Also, another obstacle to the establishment of a democratic order may be the memory of a glorious past that occurred alongside the atrocities, that is often accompanied by a denial of the violations. For instance, in Soviet Union, the memory of the victory against the Nazis tends to go along with denials of the atrocities committed by the Stalinism (Langenohl, 2008).

Truth Commissions serve long-term societal goals, such as the prevention of cycles of revenge and collective violence. Truth Commissions and trials are supposed to reinforce the rule of law and the respect of political rights. They could contribute to strengthening

social norms and reduce future human rights violations (Sikkink and Booth Walling, 2007).

As previously stated, a central aspect of these rituals is the construction of shared and inclusive collective memories and social representations of history. The memories of the conflict reinforce intergroup reconciliation as it documents factual atrocities committed by all sides involved, asserting that all groups are to blame and “have dirty hands” (a representation similar to the current view of the American civil war). Sharing blame and victimhood prevents selective victimization, in-group idealization, and opens a space towards dialogue (Gibson, 2004).

Truth Commissions in South America

In South America, different Truth Commissions were created in Argentina (1983-1984), Uruguay (1985 and 2000-2003), Chile (1990-1991 and 2003-2005), Ecuador (1996-1997 and 2008-2010), Peru (2001-2003), Paraguay (2004-2008) and Brazil (2012-2014). They had the purpose of documenting facts related to the collective violence perpetrated during the last decades (see Table 2). It is worth to note the different duration and impact of violence across the countries. Also, the time elapsed between the end of the violence and the Truth Commissions’ work as well as the different Truth Commissions approaches: amnesty and forgetting (Brazil); Truth Commission without judicial processes or with limited judicial processes (Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay); and Truth Commission with judicial processes (Argentina and Chile).

Table 2. *Political violence and Truth Commissions in South America*

Country	Period of violence	Death Toll	TC report	Time elapsed	Trials
Argentina	1976-83	8960	1985	2 years	Yes
Brazil	1964-85	434	2014	29 years	No
Bolivia	1967-82	155	N.D	N.D	N.D
Chile	1973-90	3428	1991/2005	1 year	Yes
Colombia	1960-19	220000*	N.D	N.D	N.D
Ecuador	1984-88	85	2010	22 years	Limited
Paraguay	1954-89	337	2008	19 years	Limited
Peru	1980-00	69000	2003	3 years	Limited
Uruguay	1973-82	164	1985/03	3 years	Limited

Note: * Until 2012.

Source: Based on Hayner (2011) and updated with Brazilian (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b) and Colombian data (Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 2013).

Although sharing similarities, South American countries also present many differences among each other. In Brazil, the forgetting process and the relatively low impact of the dictatorship might relate to Brazilian character constructed throughout its history since colonization. For instance, the phenomenon of ashamed authoritarianism (Gaspari, 2002) that is violent but seeing itself as benevolent. This character formation is briefly explained next.

To understand Brazilian history: from colonization to the dictatorship and beyond

The colonization process and its influence in Brazilian politics

As in any society, we have to be aware of the previous events to understand current Brazilian history. Some of the classical contributions usually pointed out as essential to understand Brazilian character are: “The masters and the slaves” by Gilberto Freyre

(1933/2003), “Roots of Brazil” by Sergio Buarque de Holanda (1936/1995) and “The formation of Brazilian people” by Darcy Ribeiro (1995).

Brazil was colonized by Portugal, differently from the other countries in South America that were colonized by Spain. The main distinctive feature of Brazilian colonization was the plantation way of production in huge farms, using slaves brought from Africa (Freyre, 1933/2003). That occurred because of the small population Portugal had in that time (about a million people) to colonize and govern such an immense territory. Therefore, vast portions of land were given to settlers, and the slave trade commerce was developed to bring work-force labors to these plantations. Given the farms were usually huge; the masters often had many slaves at their disposal, and the conflicts were judged by the masters instead of the government judicial system. Generally, the government was very distant from the majority of the population. For the median person, it was better to have a good relationship with some influential person than being right (Freyre, 1933/2003; Holanda, 1936/1995). This inequality created a sense that it was critical contain rebellions (of slaves, for example), instead of developing an integrative society of active citizens (Holanda, 1936/1995). That resulted in a political unity founded in violence and oppression towards compliance. Moreover, the high inequality and little social mobility rather than generate conflicts led to the naturalization of two different castes: the elite and the people (Ribeiro, 1995).

Another important aspect of Brazilian society is the miscegenation. Given the scarce population of European women, many masters usually had children with indigenous or black women. These children grew up in a limbo between being a master or a slave. That helped to develop a mixed violent paternalist character in Brazilian elites. Although maintaining the distances, some affection and care could be part of the relationship between the master and the illegitimate children (Freyre, 1933/2003). The evolution of the “cordial man” (the friendly Brazilian personality) was the result of the paternalist character in both, the elite and the subalterns. Because emotional relationships are more important than formal relations, people in Brazil always strive to be agreeable and never be considered as violent (Holanda, 1936/1995).

However, at the same time, the relationships between legitimate children and lots of slaves usually developed sadistic personalities on the former, and masochist personalities on the latter. In the adult, this sadistic personality was expressed in authoritarianism and violence, sometimes disguised in the sense of duty (Freyre, 1933/2003). On the other hand, the masochist character would have ended up in preference for authoritarianism in the people. In Freyre’s words: “privately, what the majority of Brazilian people want is the pressure on them of a powerful, manly and autocratic government (...) disguised as an authority principle or the order defense” (Freyre 1933/2003, p. 114). Curiously, the initial distant government seemed to help the development of the preference for external political powers that, in

modern times, ended up in the military dictatorships (Holanda, 1936/1995).

The main features of Brazilian society explained above remained across the centuries since the start of the colonization in 1500 until the republic established in 1889 when slavery was extinguished. Therefore, the origins of the Brazilian republic and its later functioning are intimately linked with this master and slave mindset (Holanda, 1936/1995). Thus, according to Holanda (1936/1995), democracy in Brazil would be a misunderstanding. Something imported to pretend a modern nation based on liberal values, but in reality, these ideas were implemented by a semi-feudal aristocracy used to its privileges. The people are usually witnesses with no participation and little interest in their history.

Although these characteristics were crucial to the formation of Brazilian society, some different micro-societies developed throughout the country, especially since the 19th century. Ribeiro (1995) pointed out four societal contexts moreover the plantation one: Amazonian (most indigenous and mixed-race living from extractives), Semi-arid country (poor Europeans and mixed-race grazers), Rustic country (firstly indigenous and Europeans living from mining; then little farmers immigrants mostly from Italy and Japan and industrial Europeans) and South (immigrated little farmers mostly from Germany and Italy). In the far South, the proximity with the frontier led to troop's establishment which created a military tradition that ended up forming many of the later dictators in Brazil.

The formation and establishment of the Brazilian republic: the associations between the military and political forces

Since the glorified returned from the Paraguayan War (1864-1870), the military forces achieved a critical position in Brazilian society (Agassiz, 2007). The establishment of Brazilian republic in 1889 was the turning point in which the military forces achieved to consolidate them as essential parts of Brazilian politics (Agassiz, 2007; Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b; Gomes, 2013). The end of Brazilian monarchy and the establishment of a republic was a military coup in which the ordinary people watch it astonished, being simple witnesses of the events (Gomes, 2013). It was in that time, by the minds of the new military government, that many of the national symbols such as the Brazilian flag, hymn and the positivist motto “Order and Progress” were created. Moreover, in a certain sense, Brazilian history was re-written in order to detach it from the monarchy image. Therefore, many streets, squares, schools, and even cities have their names changed throughout the country. Civic commemorative dates were created, and new heroes were celebrated (Gomes, 2013).

Correspondingly with the new status achieved by the military institutions, the new republican governments aimed to strengthen the military formation. For this purpose, exchanges with the German military school were carried out (Agassiz, 2007). The German military school at the end of the 19th century had some ideas that culminated in the Nazi philosophy and reverberated in the Brazilian military actions during the 20th century. For instance, they separated the wars into two

types: political, in which agreements are possible; and ideological, in which they are not. As stated by the German military school and later adopted by Brazilian military forces, in ideological wars the moderation is an error, the enemy has to be eliminated, and the soldiers should not worry about moral and mercy. In weak democracies, as they were in most countries at the beginning of the 20th century, any debate of ideas is considered as undermining the social order, and the military saw themselves as protectors of the nation from governments with “wrong ideas”, i.e., ideas that go against what is perceived as the tradition in that society (Agassiz, 2007). After World War I the military withdrew their influence in Brazilian politics. However, in the 1920s, a movement of junior army officers against the political establishment was organized as a political force known as “Tenentismo” and participated in both, the coup that put Getúlio Vargas on the presidency in 1930 and his government dissolution in 1945 (Agassiz, 2007).

Antecedents of 1964: the truth commission explanations for the military coup

Brazilian Truth Commission intended to provide explanations for the 1964 coup, moreover providing proofs for human rights violations occurred during the authoritarian period (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b).

According to the Truth Commission, Brazilian dictatorship (1964-1985) was a result of national political conflicts and also, in part, a local consequence of the Cold War ideological conflicts between left-wing socialists or communists and right-wing

conservative and religious (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b). In World War II Brazil fought with the allies, and the United States became the main Brazilian military ally. After the war, the anti-communism mindset increased into the military forces alongside with the tensions of the Cold War and as a result of the military training promoted by the United States. In the period between 1946 and 1964, the democracy in Brazil was fragile and unstable. The allegation to keep out the communist threat induced the governments to stalk people related to the communist parties removing their political mandates or firing functionaries. These actions generated many violent protests (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b).

In 1951, Getúlio Vargas returned to the presidency by popular vote and in 1953 he nominated João Goulart as Labor Minister. In a context of many strikes organized by the unions, Goulart made many promises to the workers to calm them down. For instance, in 1954, Goulart defended a 100% raise in the minimum wage. This kind of actions dissatisfied many sectors of business, middle-class, and military forces. Thus, the opposition to Vargas government escalated. Military and political forces pushed Vargas into resignation many times, but he refused, winning an impeachment process. However, after the revelation that Vargas' bodyguard commanded a murder attempt against his political rival Carlos Lacerda, the constraint against him was too much and he committed suicide (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b).

Vargas suicide represented an obstacle to his oppositional groups due to people were shaken towards him. The election of

Juscelino Kubitschek in 1955 was openly questioned by the oppositional forces that claimed the armed forces to “listen to their patriotism.” Nevertheless, Kubitschek could be invested, and despite some attempts of rebellion, his government was a period of relative political stability (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b).

After the Cuban Revolution in 1959, the tensions between the communist movements and conservative forces resulted in military coups throughout the continent. In 1960 a more conservative candidate, Jânio Quadros is elected president in Brazil. In that time, there were two different votes for president and vice-president. As a result, João Goulart, the polemical former minister on Vargas government, was elected as vice-president (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b). In Brazil, the fear of the communism by the conservatives and military forces increased during the presidency of Janio Quadros in 1961. His presidency was a confusing period. At the same time, he was considered as conservative and even anti-communist; he awarded Che Guevara for releasing some priests who were convicted to death in Cuba. That generated too much constraint, and he resigned. As the vice-president João Goulart was also accused of being an advocator of the communism, the nation was divided. Part of the military forces and civil society tried to prevent him from assuming the presidency, but a campaign conducted by another part of military and civil society defending his investiture was victorious (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b).

However, during Goulart’s government, the tensions between the military and conservative anticommunist and left-wing socialist or

communist escalated even more. The political climate radicalized alongside with an economic crisis and the attempts by Goulart to establish social reforms, interpreted as being communist by part of the population. Massive protests for and against the reforms upraised in March 1964. Once again, part of the civil society claimed by the military intervention in order to “stop the communist threat.” Finally, in March 31st, the military forces achieved to organize a coup which in that time was recognized as legitimated by the United States as well as some sectors of the civil society such as much of the press, commerce and lawyers associations (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b).

Brazilian dictatorship: 1964-1985

The first action of the Brazilian military regime was to repealing 102 people from their offices: parliamentarians, militaries, governors, unionists, diplomats, and ministers that were not aligned with the new government. Some of them were arrested; others exile themselves in other countries. Also, individuals and organizations identified as communist were persecuted. Five thousand people were arrested, some of them tortured. The police started to investigate any activity considered as subversive. In April 11th, 1964, the rest of the parliament elected Marshal Castelo Branco as president. A year later, all political parties were dissolved, and two new political parties were created to accommodate the politicians that were not revoked. The elections to the presidency and states governments would be indirect after that (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b).

In 1967, the parliament elected Marshal Costa e Silva as president. His government started to increase repression in 1968. After that, the president could close the parliament and legislate. He also could revoke any political mandate, and his actions could not be an object of a judicial process. As the repression intensified, it also raised the radicalization on some of the oppositional groups (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b).

In 1970, General Medici assumed the presidency and the regime reached its most oppressive period. Institutions were explicitly created to repress and persecute. The censorship was imposed in newspapers, books, and magazines. In that time, the left-wing organizations kidnapped some diplomats asking for the liberation of political prisoners, what the regime accepted. The repression was brutal, including the use of torture, murders, and disappearances (people arrested by the regime who was never seen again). In 1971, the regime was able to dismantle most of the oppositional groups, and the armed resistance decreased (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b).

In 1974, General Geisel was chosen as president. Although in the discourse, Geisel's government was characterized by an indicative of the regime openness, the repression was still going on, especially in the countryside. After 1978 the regime started to relieve. The powers of the president to close the parliament were taken off and some of the civil rights return (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b).

In 1979 General Figueiredo assumed the presidency. A law of Amnesty for both, leftist militants and state agents was approved by the parliament. Political prisoners were progressively released, and

many politicians, artists, and intellectuals in exile could return. In 1980, new political parties could be created, even left-wing ones. Progressively the civil society started to be organized in a more open social climate. Terrorist acts from right-wing organizations and militaries were observed during this period opposing this liberation (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b).

The final transition to a democratic regime started in 1982 with the elections for the parliament that would elect the next civil president. In 1985, Tancredo Neves, an oppositional, was elected with a vast majority of the votes. However, he died by natural causes just before being invested, and the vice-president elected José Sarney assumed the office ending the dictatorial period in Brazil (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b).

Brazilian Truth Commission establishment and results

Brazilian Truth Commission was created in November 2011 during the presidency of Dilma Rousseff and started its activities in 2012, 27 years after the end of the dictatorial period. Although the dictatorial period was between 1964 and 1985, the Truth Commission aimed to investigate the period between 1946 and 1988 to address the antecedents and the transition into a democratic constitution (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014a). It is important to note that Rousseff was herself a leftist militant during the dictatorship being accused of participating in armed actions such as bank robber and kidnaps. Because that, she was accused in the time of the Truth Commission

establishment of looking for revenge (Pinto, 2010), accusations that she denied (Veja, 2012).

The Brazilian Truth Commission was initially comprised by seven members nominated by President Rousseff: Claudio Fonteles (Ex-General Attorney of the Republic), Gilson Dipp (Supreme Court Minister), José Carlos Dias (Ex-Minister of Justice), José Paulo Cavalcante Filho (Ex-Minister of Justice), Maria Rita Kehl (Psychoanalyst and Journalist), Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro (Political Sciences Professor at University of São Paulo) and Rosa Maria Cardoso da Cunha (Criminal Lawyer and Advocate of Political Prisoners). Fonteles resigned in 2013 being replaced by Pedro Dallari (International Law Professor at University of São Paulo) (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014a).

During the Truth Commission work, 75 public audiences have taken place in 14 of the 27 Brazilian states, and 565 public testimonies were given on these audiences. A total of 1116 statements were given publicly or privately to the Truth Commission. Research activities were also conducted by the Truth Commission. An ombudsman channel was open to hearing complaints, and the Truth Commission conducted investigations on places of repression as well as it conducted exhumations. It is important to stress that, during the investigation, the Military Forces refused to give access to the archives about the authoritarian period (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014a).

Partial reports were released during the process. After two and a half years of work, the Truth Commission released its final report in

December 2014. The report presented the conclusion of the investigations about the human rights violations committed by state agents during the authoritarian period as well as the antecedents that conducted to the 1964 coup. It concluded that the military regime was responsible for 434 executions or disappearances and approximately 1800 cases of torture as well as many other human rights violations. The Truth Commission recognizes that the collaboration of a significant part of the civil society was critical to the establishment of the dictatorship. Governors of important states such as São Paulo, Minas Gerais, and the Rio Grande do Sul supported the coup as well as journalist, lawyer, and religious associations which later would ask for the end of the regime (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014a).

Alternative versions of the past: 1964 revolution?

Different narratives about the past are common in contexts of politically divided societies and conflictive contexts (Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2011; Páez & Liu, 2011). As time passes, the construction of a consensual representation about the past usually arises from these different narratives crystallizing in an official narrative shared by most of the society (Halbwachs, 1950/2004) which is what we usually call history (Namer, 1987). However, the existence of a conflictive current context may also lead to revisionisms and disputes between narratives (Langenbacher, 2010).

Not surprisingly, since the end of the dictatorship, the official historiography has depicted this period as a dark time with much violence and no political rights (Bezerra, 2017). This standard

narrative was similar to Truth Commission's, i.e., that the interruption of the democracy and the actions of the regime such as the repression, torture, murders, and censorship were not legitimate (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b).

However, in the last years, the authoritarian period has been the object of many best-sellers in Brazil; some of them could be considered as revisionist versions of the past (Calil, 2014). Generally, these narratives argue that the “1964 revolution, counter-revolution or movement”, as sometimes stated, was necessary to maintain the social order and to stop the threat of a communist revolution that would violate much more human rights than the militaries did. They also argue that, contrary to what is stated by part of the leftists, the oppositional organizations did not fight for the restoration of the democracy but for the establishment of a communist regime and that they were also violent on doing so (Gaspari, 2002; Narloch, 2009; Villa, 2014). This version of the past is advocated by the current president of Brazil, the retired military Jair Bolsonaro (G1, 2019a).

The evaluation of the past is an essential issue in current politics in many societies around the world. Many studies have been done on the different aspects regarding this topic. They are examined in the next paragraphs. Firstly, the studies on the life-course approach (evaluation and recalling of events lived) are presented. Then, it is presented the studies on the socio-historical events of the 20th century that are recalled as the most important. Next, the studies on the social representations of history are presented. These studies aimed to investigate the socio-historical events that are considered more

important in world history and their evaluation. Similar studies on the representations of national history are presented as well as those about historical figures and social movements. Finally, studies on the collective memory and social representations about a dictatorial past as well as those on Truth Commission's impact and evaluations are presented focusing on those of South American and Brazilian contexts.

2



Studies on Collective Memory, Social Representations of History and Truth Commissions' impact

Getúlio Vargas, with other leaders of the 1930 Revolution in Itararé-SP, shortly after the overthrow of President Washington Luís.

The second Coup d'État to succeed in Brazilian history.

An anonymous search on Google Images about this event shows this picture firstly and repeatedly.

The regime would become more authoritarian from 1937 until 1945 in a period known as “New State”.

This period is considered a predecessor of the tensions which would culminate in the 1964 military coup.

Studies on social representations of history show an extended forgetting about the authoritarian character of this period.

Three books chapters were published based on parts of this section:

Mathias, A., Páez, D., Basabe, N. & Pizarro, J. (in press). Collective memory. In A. Akande, B. Adetoun, & M. Adewuyi (Eds.), *Nova handbook of international psychology and allied disciplines: Individualism-collectivism and beyond*. New York: Nova Science Publishers.

Mathias, A., El-Astal, S., Pizarro, J., Méndez, L., Cavalli, S. & Páez, D. (2019). Social representations of history: Studies of social processes related to memory, and the CEVI Project in Palestine. In S. Seidmann (Ed.), *2018 International Congress of Social Representations Proceedings*. Buenos Aires: Universidad de Belgrano.

Páez, D., Mathias, A., Cavalli, S., Guichard, E., Pizarro, J., Méndez, L. & El-Astal, S. (2018). Flashbulb memories and collective memories: Psychosocial processes related to rituals, emotions, and memories. In O. Luminet & A. Curci (Eds.), *Flashbulb memories: New Challenges and Future Perspectives* (2nd ed., pp. 2019-239). New York: Routledge.

Many studies have been done in order to investigate the collective memory or the social representations of history. There are mainly two kinds of studies: collective memory studies - those that aim to analyze more recent events and figures that people may have witnessed or at least meet with someone who has witnessed it and; social representations of history - studies that aim to analyze the social representations about events and figures distant in the past.

Collective memory: the life-course approach

Some studies aiming to investigate collective memory were carried out in the life course approach. These researches aimed to analyze the socio-historical events which had the most impact on participants' lives. Generally, life course studies have showed that collective and political violence events, such as wars, terrorist attacks, political murderers and political turning points (for instance, coups or democracy restorations) are the most salient on the collective memory across many different societies (Broomé, Carlson, Holmberg, & Schewe, 2011; Guichard, 2015; Lalive d'Espinay, Cavalli, & Aeby, 2008; Páez et al., 2018). An exception was China, where sports and cultural events, as well as natural disasters, were more salient than politics or violence (Constantin, 2013). These studies also showed that an important part of the events (around 25%) recalled occurred during the youth of the participants (10-30 years-old) confirming the generational ideas of Mannheim (1952) and the critical age hypothesis (Mathias et al., 2019; Schuman and Scott, 1989).

Studies on the life course approach in South America found a high salience of the dictatorships on the collective memory in Argentina (Oddone & Lynch, 2008), Chile (Concha, Guichard, & Henríquez, 2009; Guichard & Henríquez, 2011) and Uruguay (Paredes & Oberti, 2015). They were highly recalled by all generation who lived them. However, these results were not found in Brazil (Páez et al., 2018), where the dictatorship was not among the ten most mentioned events.

Collective memory in the 20th Century

A similar approach on studying collective memory asked participants to mention the socio-historical events they consider as the most important ones in a given period (for instance, the last 50, 70, or 100 years). In this approach, different from the life course approach, people can mention events they have not lived. Broadly, these studies confirmed the salience of events related to politics and violence and the critical age hypothesis (Ester, Vinken, & Diepstraten, 2002; Griffin, 2004; Schuman, Akiyama, & Knäuper, 1998; Schuman & Scott, 1989; Scott & Zac, 1993). A cross-cultural study in 116 countries also found that the recalling of socio-historical events is characterized by a western-centrism mixed with some socio-centrism (Ellermann, Glowsky, Kromeier, & Andorfer, 2008).

Although many studies found a critical age effect, there is also evidence that some events are so important that they are recalled equally by all generations. That is the case for the recalling of the Civil War in Spain. However, older people did present more social sharing

and re-evaluation than younger (Valencia & Páez, 1999). Also, although the recalling of the Spanish Civil War was similar across different political positioning, the right-wing participants affirmed to talk less about it (Herranz & Basabe, 1999). Directly living an event seems to lead to a different recalling of it. For instance, elders recalled the World War II from their personal experiences while younger participants recalled it in a general way, stressing the positives outcomes (Ester et al., 2002; Schuman, Akiyama, et al., 1998). Recalling of World War II was higher for those who lived it (Schuman, Vinitzky-Seroussi, & Vinokur, 2003).

Events related to social movements (such as for civil or women rights) were more mentioned by the members of the groups involved in it (Schuman & Scott, 1989; Scott & Zac, 1993). Accordingly, participants who lived their youth in the regions with more riots recalled more than who lived elsewhere. Moreover, whites who identified themselves with other minorities such as Latin and Native American recalled more than the ones who did not (Griffin, 2004).

A slightly different approach was tried out in Russia. Participants were presented to a list of events and figures, and participants should indicate if they recognize them and write down to what they refer. Answers were judged as adequate by experts. Results might restrict critical age hypothesis. Some figures and events were more recalled among those who lived it as a child or early adolescents such as the dog Laika (first animal to be sent to space) and Katya Lycheva (an 11-year-old girl send to the United States as a sign of peace). However, important political events such as Cuban missiles

crisis and Prague spring were more recognized by people who were around the twenties when the event occurred. It was observed a strong relationship between the educational level and the degree of knowledge of the events and figures (Schuman & Corning, 2000).

Social representations of world-history

The studies above described were conducted to analyze the memory of events that were recent enough to have witnesses still alive. Another approach to this topic aims to investigate the events that participants consider as the most important in world history and their evaluation. That includes both recent and ancient events. This tradition is characterized by the conduction of cross-cultural studies. Usually, participants are asked about the last 1000 years in order to avoid religious and mythological events. Generally these studies confirmed the salience of politics and violence as well as the western-centrism mixed with some socio-centrism in representing world-history (Cabecinhas et al., 2011; Cabecinhas & Évora, 2008; Cyr & Hirst, 2019; Liu et al., 2005; Liu et al., 2009; Özer & Ergün, 2012; Pennebaker, Páez, & Deschamps, 2006) although evidence using a different approach suggest that people usually overestimate the participation of their countries in world-history (Zaromb et al., 2018).

Closed-answer studies using lists of events and figures could restrict the salience of politics and wars. For instance, the industrial revolution was evaluated as more important than many wars across seven countries. Nevertheless, western-centrism and recency effects were confirmed (Techio et al., 2010). A study carried out across 30

countries did not find universality in the evaluation of the events. There were three factors: historical calamities; historical progress and historical resistance to the oppression. Non-Western societies evaluated the historical calamities less negatively than Western (Liu et al., 2012). Another study conducted across 37 countries showed that the most positively evaluated figures were scientists, humanitarian and religious people while the most negatively evaluated were dictators, terrorists, and mass assassins. The positive figures were more consensual than the negative (Hanke et al., 2015).

Recall of World War II was deeply studied in a study carried out in 22 countries around the world. Results showed that recall of World War II was related to a higher proportion of death toll in the same war, have been victorious and materialistic values. Have been victorious was also related to a more positive evaluation of the war, and these factors were related to a greater willingness to fight in a future war (Páez et al., 2008).

Studies comparing the recall of events in different range of times (1000, 100 and 10 years) across 22 countries also showed the recency effect (participants recalled more the most recent events) and a positive bias, i.e., old events such as the French and industrial revolutions and the discovery of Americas were evaluated from their positive outcomes even resulting in many deaths (Pennebaker, Páez, & Deschamps, 2006). This study was replicated later in Turkey. Results showed a high degree of socio-centrism, and the recency effect was not confirmed (Özer & Ergün, 2012).

A different approach was tried out with undergraduate students from Germany and Greece. Participants were asked about the events in world-history which they wanted to remember and to forget, their importance and their evaluation as positive or negative. Results showed that the most cited events were the European political events in the 20th century. Events that participants wanted to remember were related with revolutions, discoveries, civilization, human rights and an effort towards cooperation, while the events they wanted to forget were related with wars, terrorism, and natural disasters. It was found a difference between the responses of German and Greek. The most cited events in each country represented issues related to their own country's history (Madoglou, Melista, & Liaris-Hochhaus, 2010).

Beliefs about the world-history were investigated in a study conducted in five African countries (Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Burundi, and Congo). Specifically, it was asked: the starting points in world history and the events which were important to bring us to the current situation. Participants affirmed that world-history should be told from the evolution (28%); wars and conflicts (21%); colonization (16%) and religion (10%). The historical transition to the present should be told through wars and conflicts (31%); colonization (21%) and technology (18%) (Cabecinhas et al., 2011).

The relations between social representations of history, emotions, and attitudes sometimes are not so clear. For instance, although African participants considered the colonization process as less negative than the Europeans, they agree more with the idea that Europeans should be ashamed and guilty about the colonial past and

they support more reparation policies (Licata et al., 2018). Although violent events usually elicit negative emotions, different emotions are linked to different violent events. For instance, wars can elicit more sadness, while terrorist attacks elicit more fear (Cabecinhas & Évora, 2008).

Different beliefs about history are associated with different representations of past events and with the willingness to fight in a future war. Beliefs in history as a progress, a result of great people acts or a divine plan were positively associated with willingness to fight in a future war whereas beliefs in nonsense history or conducted by violence were negatively associated with willingness to fight. Willingness to fight was also strongly positively associated with national proud and religiosity (Bobowik, Páez, et al., 2010). Moreover, belief in objective facts that regulate the historical change was associated with left-wing positioning and higher educational level while belief in history as the result of a great individual's actions was associated with right-wing positioning and low educational level (Rosa, Travieso, Blanco, & Huertas, 1999). Moreover, positive representations of national history were associated with psychological well-being (Ho, Leong, & Lim, 2018).

Representations of history are also associated with the consequences of the events. A study conducted across 36 countries showed that participants from defeated countries evaluated the World War II more negatively, though recognizing positive outcomes such as the return of democracy, Union Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Roughly half of the participants evaluated the war as

just (58%) and necessary (50%). The belief that it was a necessary war that led to technological advances was associated with lower negativity and importance evaluation. Finally, legitimizing representations had an effect on the willingness to fight in a future war even controlling the status of the nation (defeated or victorious) and Human Development Index (Bobowik et al., 2014).

Distant events seem to present a different pattern. An overall consensual representation was found for World War I across 20 European countries. However, it is interesting to note that the prior status of the country (Allies vs. Central Powers) was not associated to different representations of history as were the current economic and social situation of the country (Bouchat et al., 2019). Another study across ten countries found that representing World War I through negative emotions were associated with more pacifist attitudes (Bouchat et al., 2018).

Social representations of history in more specific contexts have also been investigated. Broadly, they found that the Nation-State creation and the interruption and restoration of the democracy are important events in representing a nations' history (Bombelli, Fernández, & Sosa, 2013; Brasil & Cabecinhas, 2018; Cabecinhas & Évora, 2008; Fernández, Cejas, & Sosa, 2013; Huang, Liu, & Chang, 2004a; Nencini, 2011; Rottenbacher & Espinosa, 2010). In Brazil, undergraduate students placed the Latin American dictatorships as the 2nd most important events in the continent history (Brasil & Cabecinhas, 2018).

Representations of national history can vary according to social identity, age, or collective self-esteem. In Taiwan, representations about the past varied according to the identification with Taiwan or China (Huang et al., 2004). In Italia, a study carried out with undergraduate students, and their parents and grand-parents found that younger mentioned more distant events such as the unification of the nation, while adults and elders mentioned more events that occurred during their adolescence and early youth (Nencini, 2011). Finally, In Peru, the evaluation of figures was, generally, more positive than of events. Also, the positive evaluation of events and figures was associated with collective self-esteem (Rottenbacher & Espinosa, 2010).

Beliefs about historical figures

Historical figures have been used to inspire the ideals societies want to remember or forget. For instance, in the United States participants were asked to explain what Columbus had done and if American should admire him. It was observed that the majority of the sample (85%) presented a simple and traditional representation (“He discovered America”) though there were also minority representations as both heroic (6%) and villain (4%). Educational level showed a relation with the remembrance that the natives inhabited the land first (Schuman et al., 2005). In another study, the beliefs associated with Abraham Lincoln were investigated. Results showed that Lincoln was represented mostly as a great emancipator, though there is historical evidence that point out the opposite (Schwartz & Schuman, 2005).

However, the way a question about a historical figure is addressed can influence the answers given (Schuman, Corning, & Schwartz, 2012).

Sometimes, past figures and events are used to understand current politics. During the Gulf War, Saddam Hussein was often compared to Hitler. A study carried out during that period showed that as long as the conflict raised the preference for the analogy Hussein/Hitler increased. There was a significant relationship between the preference for Hussein/Hitler analogy and the support to military action. Low educational level was associated with higher support of the military action once the war started (Schuman & Rieger, 1992). Another study found that the use of this kind of analogies (in this case, comparing current genocides with the Holocaust) was found to be associated with higher educational level (Bischoping & Kalmin, 2002).

Social movements approach

Social movements approach analyzes the collective memory as a process of competition in which groups gain status and power while they try to institutionalize their version of the past. Groups, according to this perspective, appropriate the objective facts to create memories which support their objectives in the present. Although all groups rewrite history according to their perspective, only a few are succeeded in make their version of the history widely shared and legitimated. They are succeeded when they attain political opportunities or mobilize financial and human resources on effective communication of the reality, i.e., communication that is aligned with public expectations,

that reproduce the current discourses or the latent feelings of a society (Kubal, 2008).

Changes in the social context can lead to different evaluations and importance attribution of the past (Schwartz, 1982, 1996). When the historical event is controversial, commemorations can be ambivalent, trying to accommodate different versions of the past (Wagner-Pacifici & Schwartz, 1991). Sometimes, a lack of commemoration can occur due to the division regarding a period on the past (Schwartz, 1982).

Commemoration dates can serve as both, opportunities to reinforce or to confront the official history. For instance, during the 400th and 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in America, it was observed four movements: patriotic, religious, ethnic, and anti-colonial. The figure of Columbus has a central role for many groups in the United States, such as the Afro-American, Hispanics, Catholics, Protestants, and Native American. For instance, Columbus was not remembered by his religion before the 19th century, when a significant number of Catholic immigrants came to the United States. The 400th anniversary in 1892 was celebrated as an opportunity to teach children about the obligations of being an American citizen. Columbus was represented as a symbol of progress: geographic, economic and of civilization. In 1992, during the 500th anniversary, Columbus' representations were confronted to include issues about genocide, environmental destruction, and slavery (Kubal, 2008). Although today most representations about Columbus are simplistic "He discovered

America,” minority versions have been spread, primarily through textbooks (Schuman et al., 2005).

Collective memory and social representations of history about a dictatorial past

Although studies on collective memory and social representations of history have shown that violent events are the most recalled, dictatorial past has some features that we have to bear in mind in order to analyze the social representations people construct about it. They are usually a result of a very radicalized and polarized conflict and the group belonging, ideologies or political positioning associated with the regime or its opposition may influence the collective memory and social representations of history even many years after the end of the violent period (Herranz & Basabe, 1999; Manzi et al., 2004; Muller, Bermejo, & Hirst, 2016; Prado & Krause, 2004). We have also to consider that the level of victimization and the emotional reactions that might influence in remembering the past (Arnosó & Pérez-Sales, 2013). On the other hand, younger generations who have learned about the past in school may have a more descriptive and non-emotional representation about it (Ester et al., 2002; Nencini, 2011; Schuman et al., 1998).

Many studies were carried out regarding the representations of the dictatorship in Chile. Little differences between generations regarding the representations of the dictatorship were found. The majority considered the events as violent though they also considered that there were some positive consequences. However, political positioning was associated with different importance attribution and

representations of the past. Right-wing positioning was associated with less importance attribution, more justification of the events, and more belief that there were positive consequences (Manzi et al., 2004). Another study also found differences between center and left-wing comparing to right-wing in representing the dictatorship, especially regarding the attribution of responsibility by the human rights violation. Center and left-wing participants attributed the violations to the military government, while right-wing participants attributed the violations to individuals (Prado & Krause, 2004). However, another study found that some positions towards the past and transitional justice measures are more related to ideological attitudes such as authoritarianism than to the political positioning (Carvacho, Manzi, Haye, González, & Cornejo, 2013). A study conducted aiming to verify the knowledge of children about the 1973 State Coup in Chile showed that 40% of the children presented moderated or high knowledge about the State Coup. The causes attributed to the State Coup were internal problems such as economic problems. Militaries were not mentioned as active agents but people (Haye, Manzi, González, & Carvacho, 2013). Finally, a study regarding the perceptions about the social climate in the transition to democracy found two dimensions: a conflict between the authoritarian period memories and the democratic present and; current political differences and possibilities to intervene in the public arena. The past was represented as a very polarized battlefield. Though the existence of different versions about the past was recognized, participants avoided fighting for the appropriation of memory in order to not return the

political antagonism. Participants agreed with the idea that human rights violations had taken place. Nevertheless, some considered that it was an institutional terror while others considered it as individual mistakes (Reyes, Muñoz, & Vázquez, 2013).

Studies carried out in Argentina found similar results. There is a co-existence of a consensual representation about the 1976 coup and some elements that vary according to the generations and political positioning. The generations who lived the event remember it emotionally, based on their personal experiences while the younger generations only can recall it in a semantic and more emotional distant way. Also, the left-wing participants represent it recalling more the right-wing violence (Muller, Bermejo, & Hirst, 2016; Muller & Bermejo, 2016). Studies also found consensus in Argentinean society towards learning from past mistakes (Bombelli, Mele, Zubieta, & Muratori, 2018). Another study carried out with dictatorship victims and victims' relatives in Argentina, as well as with a general sample aimed to verify the social representations towards victimization. Results showed that most of the representations were more descriptive than emotional. Victims stressed more the importance of political identity to the victimization than relatives or the general sample (Arnosó & Pérez-Sales, 2013).

In Brazil, a study conducted with a general sample aimed to investigate the social representations of the dictatorship. A free-association task was conducted with the inductor stimulus "military regime." Generally, adults showed a critical representation with few differences between rightists and leftists. Although the young generally

represented the dictatorship critically (especially leftists), they presented broader words such as “Army” or even wrong words such as “War” (especially rightists). Elders presented an ambivalent representation of the dictatorship, mentioning elements that evaluated this period as positive (especially rightists) and negative. Results also showed a minority representation of the dictatorship as a good period. Low educational level was associated with unknowing or positive representation of the dictatorship (Sá, Oliveira, Castro, Vetere, & Carvalho, 2009).

Truth Commissions: knowledge, evaluation, and emotions associated with the past

Considering Truth Commissions as official institutions that aim to help societies to construct an integrative narrative about the violent past, it is crucial to investigate their impact and evaluations in order to analyze the social representations existing about the authoritarian past.

The negative past experiences can both, be transmitted to the next generations, consciously or unconsciously (Faúndez & Cornejo, 2010; Lev-Wiesel, 2007) or conduct to a spiral of silence about the past that may prevent new generations from being in contact with the victims' experiences (Danieli, 2009). On the other hand, feeling shame about past in-group wrongdoings were associated with more disposition to confront the past (Dresler-Hawke & Liu, 2006).

In the same way, acknowledge of in-group responsibility for wrongdoings and collective guilt were associated to the support for reparation policies (Brown, González, Zagefka, Manzi, & Cehajic, 2008; Cehajić-Clancy, Efron, Halperin, Liberman, & Ross, 2011;

Meernik et al., 2016; Páez, 2010; Valencia, Momoitio, & Idoyaga, 2010) as well as feeling empathy (González, Manzi, & Noor, 2013). However, a study in Israel also showed that although more information about past in-group responsibilities reduced misconceptions about history, that was not associated to changes in the attitudes towards the out-group and the peace process (Nyhan & Zeitzoff, 2018).

Competitive victimhood mediated by high identification with the in-group, low empathy, and low trust in the out-group is associated with the justification of past violence and less disposition to forgiveness (Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, Manzi, & Lewis, 2008). Related to that, low identification or low salience of the in-group seems to increase the collective guilt (Cehajić-Clancy et al., 2011; Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 2005).

Support for reparation policies could be a combination of cognitive and emotional factors (Manzi & González, 2007). A meta-analytical study showed that collective guilt and trust are the strongest facilitators to forgiveness while negative emotions and in-group identity are the most substantial obstacles (Van Tongeren, Burnette, O'Boyle, Worthington, & Forsyth, 2014). Moreover, evidence suggests that keeping the transitional processes oriented towards a peaceful future instead of the violent past has the potential to lead towards reconciliation (Ugarriza & Nussio, 2017). Strategies to justify violent acts against innocent include the attribution of responsibility to the enemy, the dehumanization of the victims and the different evaluations for in and out-groups suffering (Sabucedo, Blanco, & De La Corte, 2003).

Truth Commissions are an instance in which the victims and perpetrators can feel welcome to give their statements, share their experiences, maybe enhancing the sympathy for them (Beristain, 2005). Although the experience of testimony could be risky to survivors in terms of re-experimentation of trauma or even harassment (Brounéus, 2008, 2010), the establishment of a supportive social environment including artistic and social activities of remembrance can help victims and witness to break the silence about a violent past and decrease negative emotions (Liem, 2007; Valencia & Páez, 1999). Understanding the origins of past violence can also help to overcome it (Staub, Pearlman, Gubin, & Hagengimana, 2005). In this sense, the social sharing and re-evaluation of past traumatic social events are associated with more knowledge about the event, although initially provoking more extreme attitudes (Páez, Basabe, & González, 1997). Accordingly, the salience of memory policies was associated with a better evaluation of a Truth Commission and the social climate comparing with when this information is not available (Valencia et al., 2010).

Truth Commission positive evaluation seems to depend on their activities been well diffused and shared (Arnosó, Bobowik, & Beristain, 2015; Arnosó, Cárdenas, Páez, & Beristain, 2013; Arnosó, Muratori, Páez, Zubieta, & Cárdenas, 2014). Also, Truth Commissions' positive evaluation was associated with more positive socio-emotional climate and more inter-group and institutional trust. Furthermore, the salience of the collective violent past alongside with apologies can improve the social climate and enhance intergroup reconciliation (Páez,

2010). In Argentina, although the information about the Truth Commission's work was low, participants presented a positive evaluation about it perceiving it as effective (Zubieta, Bombelli, & Muratori, 2015). Victimization was associated with perceiving the social climate as more positive, and this effect is mediated by the social sharing about the Truth Commission and the dictatorship as well as by the positive evaluation of the Truth Commission (Bombelli, Muratori, & Zubieta, 2018). In Uruguay, though participants affirmed to have much knowledge about the dictatorial period, they talked little about it, and it did not elicit much emotion on them. The victims reported feeling more emotions regarding the authoritarian period (Arnosó & Da Costa, 2015).

Collective memory rituals can reinforce pro-social behavior and improve social cohesion (Beristain et al., 1999). These rituals of collective memory construction and reconstruction are perceived to have other positive effects at the individual and the macro-social or national level, fortifying in-group cohesion and reconciliation in long term process (Lillie & Janoff-Bulman, 2007). In the same way, acknowledge of harm-doing by a group can reduce animosity in the other group reducing negative emotions (Iqbal & Bilali, 2018).

In this sense, a positive attitude toward forgiveness seems to be associated with more social contact (Cehajic-Clancy, Brown, & Castano, 2008). However, evidence suggests that intergroup forgiveness can be challenging to reach (Philpot & Hornsey, 2008) with little associations to the emotions elicited by a Truth Commission report (Cárdenas, Castro, Ascorra, San Martín, Rodríguez, & Páez,

2013). In societies that have passed through a very polarized conflict, people may prefer to silence themselves in order to not revive old tensions (Bar-Tal, 2017). However, positive Truth Commissions outcomes and low belief in forgiveness can coincide (Cárdenas, Páez, Rimé, Bilbao, & Asún, 2014). Moreover, the positive outcomes achieved through efforts towards reconciliation and forgiveness can remain in the long run (Cilliers, Dube, & Siddiqi, 2016).

Experimentation of traumatic social events could be related to both, initial negative emotion arousal but also positive effects on social cohesion, support, and climate (Rimé et al., 2010). Long-term effects of political violence were found in Chile. Victims reported more negative emotions towards the past and perceived the current emotional climate as more negative than non-affected (Cárdenas et al., 2014). Evidence from Rwanda suggests that Truth Commissions enhances intergroup trust decreasing negative out-group stereotypes although presenting affective costs for the victims increasing negative emotions as well as increasing the perception of negative social climate (Beristain, Páez, Rimé, & Kanyangara, 2010; Kanyangara, Rimé, Philippot, & Yzerbyt, 2007; Rimé, Kanyangara, Yzerbyt, & Páez, 2011). Remembrance of apologies in Spain presented similar effects increasing shame and sorrow among victims and decreasing the perception of positive social climate among those who identified with the victims' group (Bobowik, Bilbao, & Momoitio, 2010). On the other side, apologies sincere perceptions were found as improving the social climate in Argentina, Chile, and Paraguay (Bobowik et al., 2017).

The social contexts in which Truth Commissions are carried out are an important variable to bear in mind on analyzing collective emotions. When offered in proper circumstances, transitional justice actions such as the official apologies can reinforce trust, positive intergroup attitudes, and forgiveness (Blatz & Philpot, 2010). On the other hand, negative contexts can develop negative social climates, which in turn may evoke negative behaviours (Bar-Tal, Halperin, & de Rivera, 2007). A positive social climate could be defined by the emotional relationships based on the concern for others and the feelings of freedom, trust, and security (De Rivera & Páez, 2007).

Different variables were associated with supporting transitional justice across many countries. Support for transitional justice in Spain was associated with left-wing political positioning, victimization (direct or indirect) and lower age (Aguilar, Balcells, & Cebolla-Boado, 2011). In Peru, Truth Commission positive evaluation were associated to supporting reconciliation and reject the violence to achieve social changes (Espinosa et al., 2017) and in Uruguay, Truth Commission activities were generally perceived as not very much effective being the victims the ones who perceived more effectiveness (Arnosó & Da Costa, 2015).

On the other hand, in Colombia, victimization was not associated to the attitudes towards transitional justice (Nussio, Rettberg, & Ugarriza, 2015) but the knowledge and proximity with the transitional justice activities as well as the vulnerability to retribution (judicial or extrajudicial) were associated to more positive attitudes towards the transitional justice (Daly, 2018) as well as bringing the

perpetrators to justice and structural changes to stop the violence (Taylor, Nilsson, & Amezquita-Castro, 2015). Accordingly, the recognition that the trials could properly punish the perpetrators were associated with more disposition towards reconciliation in the former Yugoslavia (Meernik et al., 2016).

Evidence on the effects of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions on collective memory is mixed. Effects of transitional justice strategies on the evaluation of past issues were found in Central Europe (David, 2013). Gibson's (2004) study in South Africa found that people who were more willing to accept the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions' version of the truth, that is, to accept collective memory declaring that all sides are to blame and "have dirty hands", agreed more with reconciliation, even if this "truth effect" was stronger for the perpetrator groups.

Latin-American studies showed more limited effects. Globally, a positive evaluation of the South American commissions' ability to build an inclusive collective memory was associated to a general positive evaluation of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, to agree with collective learning from the past, to strong social sharing and emotional activation by respect to the past and finally with a better perception of social and emotional climate (Cárdenas, Zubieta, Páez, Arnosó, & Espinosa, 2016). However, it is essential to remark that the construction of an inclusive collective memory was not necessarily positive associated with forgiveness and it is important to remind that, generally, neither victims (direct or indirect) nor the general population believes that forgiveness could be achieved. Evidence suggests that the

achievement of justice, truth, and future-oriented goal of prevention are more relevant for reconciliation. The past-oriented task of creation of an inclusive narrative or integrative collective memory was less relevant than the future-oriented of prevention and the punitive function of justice (Cárdenas, Páez, & Rimé, 2013).

Other important aspects related to a better evaluation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions are the knowledge about it, victimization, to share more about it and the past, to feel more sadness and fear about the past but also hope and pride about the commission and to feel a more positive current emotional climate. In three samples (Argentina, Chile, and Peru) a positive view of the construction of a shared and inclusive collective memory was associated to higher need to talk but also to inhibition of experience (Cárdenas et al., 2016). Also, age was found to be associated with emotional reaction and TC effectiveness perception (Arnosó, Cárdenas, & Páez, 2012).

A study conducted in five South-American countries aimed to investigate the attitudes associated with the dictatorial past as well as the knowledge, evaluation, and emotions associated with the Truth Commissions (Arnosó et al., 2015). Most of the participants (84%) agreed with the idea that it is necessary to learn from the past mistakes, although right-wing participants usually disagreed with that idea. Most of the participants affirmed to know Truth Commissions' work (58%) though fewer participants (46%) considered them as effective. Similar results were found to the beliefs that it helped: victims' families to get information (52%), to achieve justice (45%), to prevent new violations (44%) and to create a shared history (43%). Half of the participants

perceived the official apologies as sincere, but fewer considered it effective (25%) or that victims would forgive perpetrators (23%). The need to talk about the past, social sharing, Truth Commission knowledge, and perceived efficacy and the negative emotional impact were higher among those who were victims and leftists.

Participants who affirmed to know Truth Commissions' work perceived it as more effective and showed a higher negative emotional impact. The emotional climate was generally perceived as negative. Higher perception on the sincerity of apologies and Truth Commission efficacy was associated with a better perception of the emotional climate (Arnosó et al., 2015).

Similar results were found through a multiple regression for data from the general sample in Argentina, Chile, and Peru (Cárdenas et al., 2016). Truth Commissions positive evaluations were related to the fulfillment of their functions, such as help to achieve the truth, to create an integrative history and to prevent new violations, as well as with a positive evaluation of official apologies.

The studies presented help to understand the many variables which could play a role on a Truth Commission evaluation, its psychosocial outcomes, and the social representations of history. This thesis aims to provide evidence for the integration of the Truth Commission impact and evaluations to social representations of history. Four studies were designed to achieve this goal:

Study 1: investigated public comments on the internet about the Truth Commission on the day of its final report release.

Study 2: analyzed the Truth Commission impact and evaluations in Brazil across three samples: one of undergraduate students, just before the commission's report released at the end of 2014; another in 2015, with an adult sample and right after the report release and; the third sample, in 2017, was also comprised of adults.

Study 3: investigated the social representations of the dictatorship in Brazil and its association with psychosocial variables.

Study 4: a meta-analytical study carried out to integrate Brazilian results about the Truth Commission impact and evaluations with the findings in other South American countries where similar researches were conducted (Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Peru).

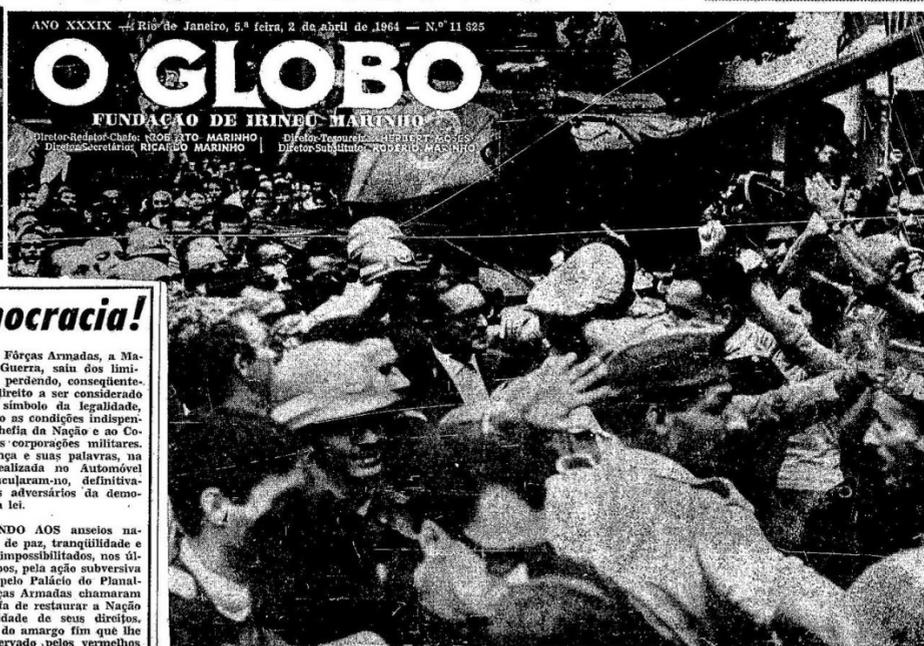
FUGIU GOULART E A DEMOCRACIA ESTÁ SENDO RESTABELECIDA

EMPOSSADO MAZZILLI NA PRESIDÊNCIA

TEXTO NA
6.ª PÁGINA



O incêndio da UNB mostrou o sentimento de revolta do povo contra os agitados e falsos estudantes (Texto na 6.ª página)



ANO XXXIX — Rio de Janeiro, 5.ª feira, 2 de abril de 1964 — N.º 11 825

O GLOBO

FUNDAÇÃO DE IRINEU MARINHO

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Ressurge a Democracia!

VIVE A NAÇÃO dias gloriosos. Porque souberam unir-se todos os patriotas, independentemente de vinculações políticas, simpatias ou opinião sobre problemas isolados, para salvar o que é essencial: a democracia, a lei e a ordem.

GRAÇAS A DECISÃO e ao heroísmo das Forças Armadas, que obedientes a seus chefes demonstraram a falta de visão dos que tentavam destruir a hierarquia e a disciplina, o Brasil livrou-se do Governo irresponsável, que insistia em arrastá-lo para rumos contrários à sua vocação e tradições.

COMO DIZIAMOS, no editorial de anteontem, a legalidade não poderia ser a garantia da subversão, a escusa dos agitadores, o anteparo da desordem. Em nome da legalidade não seria legítimo admitir o assassinio das institui-

ramos das Forças Armadas, a Marinha da Guerra, saiu dos limites da lei, perdendo, conseqüentemente, o direito a ser considerado como um símbolo da legalidade, assim como as condições indispensáveis à Chefia da Nação e ao Comando das corporações militares. Sua presença e suas palavras, na reunião realizada no Automóvel Clube, vincularam-no, definitivamente, aos adversários da democracia e da lei.

ATENDENDO AOS anseios nacionais, de paz, tranquilidade e progresso, impossibilitados, nos últimos tempos, pela ação subversiva orientada pelo Palácio do Planalto, as Forças Armadas chamaram a si a tarefa de restaurar a Nação na integridade de seus direitos, livrando-a do amargo fim que lhe estava reservado pelos vermes que haviam envolvido o Executi-

**Social representations of Brazilian
Truth Commission on news comments**

“Democracy is being restored!” Frontpage of the main newspaper in Brazil “O Globo” the day after the coup; 49 years after this event, in 2013, O Globo recognized its error in evaluating the 1964 coup as a democratic movement (O Globo, 2013).

The representations of an event may change to include its consequences into a coherent narrative.

The social representations theory may help to understand how the different collective memories about a polemical present changes into shared social representations about the past throughout time.

Social representations of Brazilian Truth Commission on news comments

Anderson Mathias¹, Darío Páez¹, Brigido Camargo², Carolina
Alzugaray³, Lidiane Araújo⁴, Adriele Pinto⁴

¹Universty of the Basque Country – Spain

²University of Santa Catarina – Brazil

³University Santo Tomás – Chile

⁴University of Paraíba – Brazil

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Abstract

Introduction: The study investigated the representations of the Brazilian Truth Commission from the news comments about its final report released on December 2014. **Method:** Comments (N=322) were collected in the three major newspapers websites in Brazil: "Folha de São Paulo," "O Globo" and "O Estado de São Paulo" during the 48 hours right after the report publication. They were patronized and submitted to a lexical analysis on the software Alceste. **Results:** Three classes emerged, all of them critical of the Truth Commission. Radicalized discourses justifying the violations and revisionist theories denying the existence of a dictatorship were observed. **Discussion:** Results were in line with social media theories about online behavior, but they do not corroborate researches on the social representations of the military regime in Brazil.

Keywords: collective memory, social representations, social media, transitional justice.

Many countries in Latin America were ruled by authoritarian military regimes in the second half of the 20th century, such as in Brazil (1964 to 1985). These regimes were a consequence of Cold War conflicts between leftist socialists or communists and rightist conservatives (see Agassiz, 2007). The transition to a democratic government in Brazil was based on an amnesty law which prevented the investigation of the violations perpetrated. Only after 27 years, in 2012, a Truth Commission was carried out aiming to reveal the truth about the authoritarian period. However, since the final report publication, revisionist far-right increased in acceptance in Brazil, resulting in the election of Jair Bolsonaro (a congressman who denies the existence of a dictatorship or human rights violations during this period) for president in October 2018 with 55.1% of the vote.

Moreover, although history text-books still represents the military regime negatively (Bezerra, 2017), revisionist books representing it more positively has become popular (Calil, 2014) and support for democracy has dropped (Corporación Latinobarómetro, 2016). Considering that the increase of revisionism seems to start right after the Truth Commission final report release, it is important to analyze its impact on that time. On this regard, we aimed to analyze the spontaneous discourse made by internet users on news comments about the final report through the social representations theory approach.

Truth commissions: overcoming a violent past

Truth and Reconciliation Commission – TC – is a kind of transitional justice that has been carried out in more than 50 countries. Its main functions are: reveal the truth; contribute to create an integrative history that considers the different narratives about the past; prevent new conflicts to arise and, sometimes, promote justice for the victims (Hayner, 2011). In Brazil, its main goal was “examine and clarify the serious human rights violations (...) aiming to accomplish the right to memory and to historical truth and to promote a national reconciliation” (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014a). Its work did not aim to prosecute the perpetrators. The final report, published in December 2014, concluded that the military regime in Brazil was directly responsible for 434 murders and disappearances, besides 1843 torture cases, moreover the political rights restriction (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014a).

South American authoritarian regimes have been shown as having an impact on people’s personal life (Concha et al., 2009; Oddone & Lynch, 2008; Paredes & Oberti, 2015). Previous studies about TCs’ impact in South America show that they are perceived as effective when there is sympathy with the victims, institutional trust and a positive social climate (Arnosó et al., 2015; Cárdenas et al., 2016) . Opinions about the TC can also be related to changes in the representations of history, being the context of the country an important variable in creating integrative narratives about the past (Arnosó et al., 2015). Many variables can interfere in the elaboration of different representations about the past such as the degree of

knowledge about the past hold by those who did not lived in (Haye et al., 2013), the present political discourse (Reyes et al., 2013) or the representations of other aspects of the past such the violations (Arnosó & Pérez-Sales, 2013).

Social representations of history

A useful approach to study these kinds of phenomena is the social representations theory (Moscovici, 1961/2012; Sammut, Andreouli, Gaskell, & Valsiner, 2015).

The social representations can be defined as:

"system of values, ideas and practices with a twofold function; first, to establish an order which will enable individuals to orient themselves in their material and social world and to master it; and secondly to enable communication to take place among the members of a community by providing them with a code for social exchange and a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their world and their individual and group history" (Moscovici, 2009, pp. 21).

The social representations are constructed through communication, sometimes defying the official history (Ahonen, 1997). On the individual level, unknown or new phenomena or ideas, such as the Truth Commission in Brazil, engender a need to give it some meaning. It occurs through two processes: anchoring and objectification. Through anchoring, the unknown idea is categorized within the existing models. For instance, representations about the TC

could be anchored on the representations about the president who carried it out. The objectification process aims to transform a concept which is initially abstract into an image, something easy to be remembered and diffused (e.g., Che Guevara as a symbol of communism in Latin America) (Moscovici, 2009). On the other side, on the social level, the different social representations about a phenomenon tend to reach a consensus, though many times the hegemonic representation can coexist with minority representations (Abric, 1976, 1993, 2001; Moscovici, 2011).

Social representations theory aims to analyze how scientific theories are assimilated and changed by common sense. History, like any science, does not evade these transformations. It is often questioned and distorted to fulfill political goals (Langenbacher, 2010) and it drives political behavior (Bar-Tal, 2007; Liu & Hilton, 2005; Páez et al., 2008; Wohl & Branscombe, 2008)■ being often used to justify and legitimate present demands and attitudes (Bobowik et al., 2014; Liu, Sibley, & Huang, 2014). Construct a widely accepted representation of the past has been shown as very important to construct a peaceful society (Liu, Wilson, McClure, & Higgins, 1999; Sibley & Liu, 2007) or for reconciliation of groups once in conflict (Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2011; Beristain et al., 2010; Gibson, 2004)© .

The establishment of democratic governments or its interruption has been shown as essential elements to represent a nation's past (Bombelli et al., 2013; Fernández et al., 2013; Huang et al., 2004; Nencini, 2011). In Brazil, representations of the Getúlio Vargas authoritarian government (1937-1945) shows the progressive

forgetting about this regime and the associations of low education and less political involvement to not consider him as a dictator (Naiff, Sá, & Naiff, 2008). Regarding the military regime, its representation varies according to age, political positioning, and educational level. Although the overall representation is critical, stressing the human rights violations, some young can represent it in a more abstract, and sometimes, wrong way (for example, they sometimes point out an inexistent war). On the other hand, elders show ambivalent opinions. A representation of the military regime as an orderly good time has a significant presence in this group alongside a critical representation, though it is also present as a minority representation among young people. Right-wing positioning and low education also seem to be related to a more positive view of the past (Sá et al., 2009).

During the years after the end of the military regime, right-wing political parties seemed to have adopted a strategy to distance themselves of it (Madeira & Tarouco, 2010). However, the rising of Jair Bolsonaro might evidence that this position could be changing in Brazil. Bolsonaro rising can be considered as part of similar right-wing political movements around the world such as Donald Trump in the United States, Marine Le Pen in France, Viktor Orbán in Hungary or Rodrigo Duterte in The Philippines. Many reasons have been drawn to explain the rising of these movements (see Muis & Immerzeel, 2017). The strongest evidence coming from cultural and economic issues (Georgiadou, Rori, & Roumanias, 2018; Inglehart & Norris, 2016; Mudde, 2014). A explanation to the far-right rising that is gaining support is the influence of the social media and online interactions to

give voice to radicals and put them into contact (see Engesser, Fawzi, & Larsson, 2017). Therefore, studying these interactions seems to be very important to understand these movements, especially when trying to construct a consensual version of the past to avoid future conflicts.

Public opinion, online interaction, and misinformation

Communication processes are the basis for constructing knowledge about the social world, and different kinds of communication can result in different ways to represent an object (Moscovici, 1961/2012). On this regard, the internet seems to be a realm of rumors, fake news or conspiracy theories (Törnberg, 2018). It can preview political trends and changes in public opinion (Bovet, Morone, & Makse, 2018). Comments in news websites represent an opportunity to analyze the opinions about a social topic, especially if they are polemic. The disposition to give opinions on-line seems to be related to more participation in political activities outside the virtual environment (Boulianne, 2015; Liu & Fahmy, 2011). However, on-line comments can be biased by few users extremely actives (Albrecht, 2006) or gender (Mitchelstein, 2011; Nagar, 2011). Although comments cannot be considered as representatives of the general population opinions, they can represent the opinions held by large segments of society, and it can influence readers (Henrich & Holmes, 2013). On this regard, people committed to a topic tend to think that public opinion is on their side when they mostly read comments congruent with their point of view (Lee, 2012; Lee & Jang, 2010).

Additionally, exposition to radicalized comments can lead to an increase in radicalization (Anderson, Brossard, Scheufele, Xenos, & Ladwig, 2014; Santana, 2014). People tend to emit more their opinion when they think that the public opinion is on their side, and they tend to emit less when they think the opposite (Liu & Fahmy, 2011; Noelle-Neumann, 1974). Some psychosocial processes can support misinformation online or offline. At least two cognitive biases could be related to these processes: priming and confirmation bias. The first confounds familiarity with truth making information which is widely spread and repeated seems trustful (Kahneman, 2011). The last refers to the tendency to continue to believe in the same things, ignoring new information opposing one own belief (Festinger, 1957; Kahneman, 2011).

Brazilian TC was carried out to construct an integrative narrative about the past and to prevent new conflicts from arising. Construct a shared representation of history has been shown as a crucial step towards the maintenance of peace and a democratic rule. Considering that news comments could generate political engagement and change public opinion, it seems essential to analyze how the news about the TC report release was commented on-line.

Method

Procedure and sample

Exploratory documental research was conducted from the collection of comments made by internet users about the news noticing the release of Brazilian TC report. The collection was made in two

major newspapers websites (“*Folha de São Paulo*” and “*O Globo*”) and another major newspaper’s *Facebook* page (“*O Estado de São Paulo*”). These three newspapers are the most read newspapers with national coverage in Brazil, summing up 15 million followers on *Facebook* (Associação Brasileira de Jornais, 2018). Anonymous comments were possible on the two newspapers websites. In *Facebook* it is quite difficult, though it is not impossible, to comment anonymously because it would require creating a new account profile on the website.

The comments were collected during the 48 hours after the news publication. Generally speaking, the news on the three newspapers described the release of the TC report, the ceremony that gives this report to the president Dilma Rousseff, who received the report commoved because she was a victim of the regime herself being tortured by government agents. The news mentioned the results of the TC work, remembering its goals, and they mentioned president’s discourse remembering the victims and the importance of revealing the truth to not repeat the violations. She also said to reject any revenge.

The news elicited 322 comments on the three newspapers (*Folha de São Paulo*, N=82; *O Globo*, N=66; *O Estado de São Paulo*, N=174) during the 48 hours. Repeated comments, comments that only tagged other people, as well as comments not related to the subject, were eliminated.

Data analysis

Comments were transcribed into a textual *corpus* which was submitted to a lexical analyze on the software Alceste (Reinert, 1998). This software conducts a statistical lexical analysis which seeks to identify repetitive language patterns, looking for the organization of the discourse (Kalampalikis & Moscovici, 2005) allowing the analysis of its context (Moscovici, 1994). First, the text is decomposed into groups of words or phrases called elementary contextual units. Then, the clusters obtained through a Descendent Hierarchical Analysis provide a visualization of the social representations or imagine fields about the topic (Veloz, Nascimento-Schulze, & Camargo, 1999).

Results

Once the *corpus* was submitted to the standard treatment on Alceste, 456 Elementary Context Units (ECUs) emerged. ECUs are “separated portions of text within the corpus that need to be analyzed separately in order to make substantive sense” (Hohl, Tsirogianni, & Gerber, 2012). From the ECUs obtained, 77% was retained by the software to analyze, corresponding to 9799 words, from which 2823 were different forms. Alceste analyzes considered the words with frequency bigger than the mean of occurrences by word ($M=3.47$) and χ^2 (measures the link between element and class) above 3.84 (d.f.=1, $p \geq 0.05$).

The Descendent Hierarchical Analysis structured the corpus in three classes (Figure 1). In the first step, the corpus was split into two subcorpora, the group comprised of classes 1 and 3 on the left side as

opposed to the class 2 on the right side. In the second step, the second subcorpus was divided in two, dividing classes 1 and 3.

Analyzing the thematic contexts showed in Figure 1, we can infer that the conjunct of classes revealed by Descendent Hierarchical Analysis feature internet users shared knowledge about the TC, showing that each class holds particularities which comprise the social representations about this subject. The classes' features are, next, described and discussed.

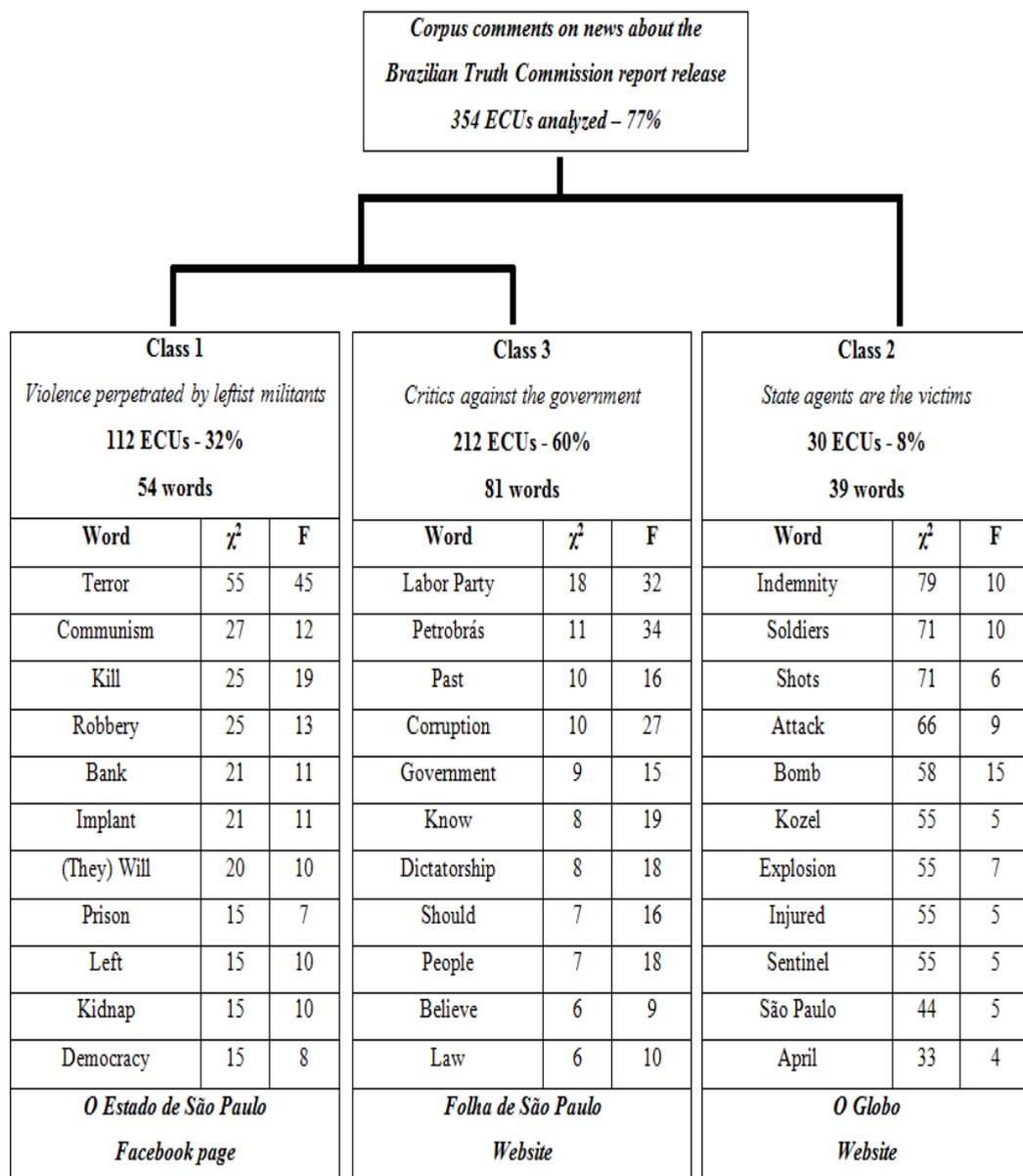


Figure 1. Classes emerged from the Descendent Hierarchical Analysis on the comments on news about the Brazilian Truth Commission report release

Source: Elaborated by the authors from the output given by the software Alceste.

The class 1, named *Violence perpetrated by leftist militants*, was generated from 112 ECUs, corresponding to 32% of total ECUs. It covered radical words such as terror ($\chi^2 = 55$), communism ($\chi^2 = 27$), kill ($\chi^2 = 25$), robbery ($\chi^2 = 25$), bank ($\chi^2 = 21$), implant ($\chi^2 = 21$), (they) will ($\chi^2 = 20$), prison ($\chi^2 = 15$), left ($\chi^2 = 15$), kidnap ($\chi^2 = 15$) and democracy ($\chi^2 = 15$). This classes represented more comments from *Facebook* users on “*O Estado de São Paulo*” page. The most representative examples of this class discourses are:

“(…) (They) were subversive of the public order, terrorists who practiced robberies against banks, houses, shipping companies and quarters, they kidnapped and tortured ambassadors, they killed many people, and also they sentenced many fellows.”

(Comment 159; *O Estado de São Paulo*; $\chi^2 = 26$)

“(…) When will they point the crimes of terrorism and kidnapping made by the Commies?”

(Comment 263; *O Estado de São Paulo*; $\chi^2 = 22$)

“(…) Dilma was a terrorist, bank robber, kidnapper of authorities and maybe murderer in the trials that terrorists of VAR-Palmares made in their apparatus, the terrorists, inebriated by the communism.”

(Comment 185; *O Estado de São Paulo*; $\chi^2 = 19$)

“(…) Do they remember a certain murderer, a bank robber who exploded bombs around and today continues to implant terror in Brazilian? Shame on, Brazil!”

(Comment 149; O Estado de São Paulo; $\chi^2 = 13$)

In this class, TC is perceived as linked to the leftist organizations that existed during the regime, being partial because of that. Although the news was about the TC report publication, whose the goal was the investigation of the human rights violations committed by the military government, this class presents supposed crimes committed by leftist organizations. These organizations are evaluated as terrorists and users claim that their crimes should have also been investigated. It was observed that the kidnapping of the American ambassador Charles Elbrick had a substantial impact in the discourse against the leftist organizations, as well as murders attributed to these organizations by the users. President Dilma Rousseff was also related to these organizations and crimes, suggesting she has no right or lacks moral virtue to conduce investigation about this period, though she denies these crimes (Folha de São Paulo, 2009) and she was convicted only by subversion.

Related to class 1, class 3 “*Criticism against the government*” comprised 212 ECUs (60% of total ECUs). The word radicals that represent this class were: PT (Labor Party – Party of the President Rousseff) ($\chi^2 = 18$), Petrobrás (State-owned oil company – Object of corruption scandal) ($\chi^2 = 11$), past ($\chi^2 = 10$), corruption ($\chi^2 = 10$), government ($\chi^2 = 9$), know ($\chi^2 = 8$), dictatorship ($\chi^2 = 8$), should ($\chi^2 = 7$), people ($\chi^2 = 7$), believe ($\chi^2 = 6$), law ($\chi^2 = 6$), politics ($\chi^2 = 6$), Petrobrás Scandal ($\chi^2 = 6$). This class represents more the comments in “*Folha de São Paulo*” website. Comments in this class were focused on the actual problems, mainly the corruption scandal which came out

during this year. Some comments only expressed their dissatisfaction with the government meanwhile others expressed their suspects that the TC would be an attempt to divert attention from the corruption scandals though it was implemented in 2012 and the publication date was defined beforehand. Thus, the focus in this class is the present, sometimes comparing with Rousseff and leftist organization's past, which comprise its link with Class 1. The most representative examples of this class are:

(...) The Truth Commission is not above the Brazilian constitution; she has to be impartial and observe that in the past there were exaggerations by both sides and each side has an explanation according their conveniences and moments.

(Comment 233; O Estado de São Paulo; $\chi^2 = 16$)

(...) The only thing people want to know is the truth about Celso Daniel's (a PT politician murdered) death, Lula's family patrimony, and especially about the Petrobrás scandal, this robbery that was promoted by the criminal organization Labor Party during its 12 years of government.

(Comment 68; O Globo; $\chi^2 = 12$)

(...) I want to know about the Truth Commission of Petrobrás Scandal and about the dirty money that elects this woman.

(Comment 71; O Globo; $\chi^2 = 12$)

(...) Funny, every time Dilma commoved in her speech is on Globo (Television Broadcast), why do they not show people asking her to get out?

(Comment 310; O Estado de São Paulo; $\chi^2 = 12$)

(...) Ms. Dilma knows how to be false the way she did in her campaign promises, Ms. Dilma cultivates the hate the way she did against their opponents the last elections. What hypocrisy! However, nobody believes in her bullshits and lies Ms. Dilma.

(Comment 4; Folha de São Paulo; $\chi^2 = 10$)

The last class, which was named “*State agents are the victims*” comprised 30 UCEs (8%) and represented more the comments of “*O Globo*” website. The content included the word radicals: indemnity ($\chi^2 = 79$), soldiers ($\chi^2 = 71$), shots ($\chi^2 = 71$), attack ($\chi^2 = 66$), bomb ($\chi^2 = 58$), Kozel (state agent dead in an attack organized by leftist organizations, supposedly with the participation of President Rousseff) ($\chi^2 = 55$), explosion ($\chi^2 = 55$), injured ($\chi^2 = 55$), sentinel ($\chi^2 = 55$), São Paulo ($\chi^2 = 44$), April ($\chi^2 = 33$). The most representative examples of this class are:

(...) This cry is a hoax, crocodile tears, or is she crying by Kozel, dead on an attack with her participation.

(Comment 50; Folha de São Paulo)

(...) April 15th, 1968, bomb-throwing against the old army headquarter in São Paulo, street Conselheiro Crispiano, with

two casualties, April 20th 1968, another bomb attack against the newspaper O Estado de São Paulo.

(Comment 175; O Estado de São Paulo)

(...) Antonio's family never received any indemnity or tear of failed crocodile.

(Comment 103; O Globo)

As in the other classes, the main motif is the critics of TC. However, in this class the critics are more focused on president's role during the regime as a member of a leftist organization than in TC's work. If in class 1 the focus was on the violence committed by leftist organizations, in class 3 is more clear the defense of state agents. They are described as victims of attacks perpetrated by these organizations. Soldier Mario Kozel is frequently remembered as one of these victims, and president Rouseff is associated with this attack, though she denies and she was never officially accused of it, even by the dictatorial government. Thus, their tears are seen as false, because she is apologizing as a chief of state by the crimes committed by the state against citizens but, in the evaluation of these users, she should apology by the crimes committed by leftist organizations as well. Another sensible question was the indemnity received by President Rouseff. Users' comments argued that the families of state agents dead in attacks organized by leftist organizations should also receive indemnities.

Discussion

The first aspect that immediately stands out in the result is the criticism towards TC presented in the three classes. Comments were, in general, extremely negative about TC and differed only about the aspect criticized. Some of the critics indirectly justify the human rights violations committed by the military regime. On this regard, it is vital to bear in mind that a third of Brazilian does not support democracy and fifth support the use of torture by state agents (Datafolha, 2014).

On this regard, ideological identification seems to play an essential role in the social representations about the TC and the past. The negative evaluations about President Rousseff, Labor Party, and leftists, in general, seem to anchor the negative social representations about TC work and its report. These negative evaluations seem to be radicalized since the corruption scandals that came out in 2014. This representation seems to objectify Rousseff and the leftist militants as bandits or terrorists, Labor party as corrupt and, because so, torture against them or their supporters may be justified according to some users. The negative representation of the leftists seems to be anchoring a positive social representation about the military regime. The positive view about the regime that was minority in 2005 (Sá et al., 2009) seems to be increasing in acceptance.

Some explanations for the difference in the social representations about the military regime between 2005 and 2014 can be drawn. Firstly, internet users may comprise a different population than the general one (Mitchelstein, 2011; Nagar, 2011). In the scope of the present research, it is challenging to establish if the opinions shared

represents what the general population thinks. Although internet use is growing in Brazil, only 55% of households had permanent access to internet in 2014 (IBGE, 2015). Moreover, access to internet was higher in wealthier households (90%) than in the poorer (29%) (IBGE, 2015). If we consider that Labor Party was more popular among the poor people (G1, 2014) it can help to explain the results found. Accordingly, a poll on Folha de São Paulo's Website showed that only 22% of the readers voted for Dilma Rousseff in 2014 elections (comparing with 38% of all voters who had voted for her) (Folha de São Paulo, 2015). However, even if the comments investigated do not represent the general population opinion they may represent the opinions of those who have more participation in political activities offline (Boulianne, 2015; Liu & Fahmy, 2011).

Another explanation may be that people who are motivated to comment are those who disagree with the news, often moved by strong emotions (Albrecht, 2006). Moreover, the first comments may have influenced those who agree to express their opinion (Lee, 2012; Lee & Jang, 2010) even increasing the radicalization of the discourse (Anderson et al., 2014; Santana, 2014) and those who disagree to silence (Liu & Fahmy, 2011; Noelle-Neumann, 1974). Indeed, the three classes found referred to the previous comments on each of the three newspapers analyzed indicating some resonance of the first comments.

Finally, results found may be explained by a change in the social representations about the military regime since 2005. The social representations of history are especially sensitive to present social

demands (Bobowik et al., 2014; Liu et al., 2014). Moreover, the generational change is going on 50 years after the coup that implemented the military regime in Brazil. Therefore, those who lived this event as adults are giving place to the new generation who are learning about the past from elders' narrative or the history books. The generational change is the time when the different memories should converge to a consensual social representation about the past (J. Assmann, 2008; Halbwachs, 1950/2004). However, the political climate in Brazil in 2014 was radicalized, and one of its central figures (President Dilma Rousseff) was also a significant figure during the military regime period. Thus, the current negative opinions and beliefs about President Dilma Rousseff and the leftism might be anchoring the social representations about the past. Political positioning partially anchored social representation about the military regime in 2005 (Sá et al., 2009), however, in 2014 it seems that radicalization about the political situation was affecting the overall representation of the regime.

History usually provides a coherent and legitimated narrative that is taught in schools to the next generations (Namer, 1987). What should be taught is the object of tensions and discussions and the TC, which has as one of its objectives to create an integrative narrative that includes all sides of the conflict (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b; Hayner, 2011) may have failed on this objective. The long-time passed between the end of the military regime, and the TC implementation might have influenced in the way people represented TC compared with other countries such as Argentina and Chile. In

these countries, the TC was part of the same movement that put an end on the dictatorship (Hayner, 2011), and thus, they were implemented in a context of social support. The opposite occurred in Brazil where TC published its report in a context of high rejection of both, President Rouseff and leftism in general and more radicalization on the political positions. In this context, putting the authoritarian past in agenda might have a counter-productive effect. Comments on news did not recognize the truth about the past the TC tried to construct, doubting about the results found by its investigation. In this context, they were questioning even the consensual aspects about the regime such as that it was a negative period with many violations committed by the government (Sá et al., 2009), some comments even questioning if there was a dictatorship.

Conclusions

The opinions expressed about the TC final report did not reflect the content of the report but pre-existent social representations about the TC, the government which implemented it, the president, and the military regime. For instance, even if the TC report has more than 3000 pages (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b), people were giving opinions about it seconds after its publication. This phenomenon is accordingly to the cognitive bias of ignoring or distorting the information that goes against their beliefs (Festinger, 1957; Kahneman, 2011; Moscovici, 2009). Indeed, in the three classes, the words “Truth Commission” or “report” were not present among the ten more cited words.

Thereby, it seems that TC did not accomplish its objectives among the public who are motivated do speak out online. Although its report reveals many violations committed by the military regime, these findings seem not to be recognized as truth. Thus, the TC seems not to have helped to construct an integrative history; rather, it seems to have boosted revisionism on the consensual elements of the social representations about the past. Therefore, it is difficult to believe that TC has helped to prevent new conflicts from arising.

Finally, we have to take into account the limits of the present research. Firstly, results probably do not represent the social representation of the general population. As discussed, internet users probably comprise a different population than the general one. Thus, it would be interesting to investigate the social representations of history in a general sample, also aiming to compare it with the previous research in order to verify changes in it. Moreover, the comments were collected in a radicalized context, so, it would be important to investigate the Truth Commission evaluation as well as the social representations about the past in a quieter political time to better evaluate their effect in a long-term perspective.

4



Psychosocial variables associated with the Truth Commission impact and evaluations in Brazil

The picture shows President Dilma Rousseff receiving the Truth Commission's final report on December 10, 2014. Almost 30 years after the end of the dictatorship in 1985.

The report pointed out 434 executions or disappearances committed by State agents during Brazilian dictatorship as well as more than 1800 cases of torture.

Rousseff herself was tortured. As observed in Chapter 3, her involvement with armed groups fighting against the regime arose suspicion about her impartiality to establish a Truth Commission. Despite that, Brazilian Truth Commission did not lead to any trial or punishment against the perpetrators.

Moreover, the final report was published right after a very polarized electoral running, which she won, and also during the beginning of the most significant economic and political crisis in Brazil since the restoring of democracy.

Analyzing Brazilian Truth Commission impact and evaluations in such unique circumstances is an opportunity to deepen the knowledge about the psychosocial processes involved in the transition from authoritarian regimes and in re-evaluating the past.

Psychosocial variables associated with the Truth Commission impact and evaluations in Brazil

Anderson Mathias¹, Darío Páez¹, Agustín Espinosa², Elza Techio³,
Carolina Alzugaray⁴, Salvador Sandoval⁵, Rosiane Albuquerque⁶,
Albert Moraes⁶

¹University of the Basque Country– Spain

²Pontifical Catholic University of Peru – Peru

³University of Bahia – Brazil

⁴University Santo Tomás – Chile

⁵Pontifical University of São Paulo – Brazil

⁶University of Paraíba – Brazil

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Abstract

A Truth Commission – TC – was carried out in Brazil (2012-2014) to investigate human rights violations committed by state agents, especially during the military dictatorship (1964-1985). We investigated the associations of TC effectiveness perception and psychosocial variables with the reconstruction of social cohesion. We carried out three studies: the first with undergraduate students ($N = 191$) in 2014 and the other two with adult samples in 2015 ($N = 80$) and 2017 ($N = 188$). Overall, the results showed a positive evaluation of the commission's work, although the belief that it was effective was not so high and the participation and information about their activities were low. The effects of the TC effectiveness on the reconstruction of social cohesion were found even controlling the effects of political positioning. The emotional reaction to the TC report and the attitude towards remembering past were associated with the TC effectiveness perception. Nonetheless, we found some different results across the studies. The results are discussed based on the transitional justice and collective memory field but also considering Brazilian TC and dictatorship particularities.

Keywords: truth commissions, collective memory, transitional justice, social representations of history, political conflict.

A military dictatorship ruled Brazil between 1964 and 1985. It was one of many in Latin America in the second half of the 20th century as a consequence of Cold War ideological tensions between left-wing socialists or communists and right-wing conservative (Agassiz, 2007). During this period, thousands of citizens were persecuted because of their political beliefs. In Brazil, more than 1800 were tortured, and 434 were killed or disappeared (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b).

The end of the dictatorial regime in Brazil was characterized by a slow opening that resulted in an Amnesty law in 1979 for both government agents and oppositional armed groups. Implementation of the Amnesty law complicated the investigation of violations that occurred in the years after the return of democracy. Only 27 years after the end of the dictatorship, in 2012, a Truth Commission – TC – was carried out seeking to find the truth about the violations perpetrated by the dictatorial regime without prosecution of perpetrators though (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b).

Truth Commissions and the construction of an inclusive collective memory

Along with the transition from an authoritarian to a democratic society, there is a necessity to come to terms with the past (Rosoux, 2001). There are three essential steps to the reconstruction of social cohesion. First, the acceptance of the facts about the events, including others' suffering, is essential for the construction of shared representations of the past. Second, it is essential to remember what happened but not maintaining hatred. Acknowledge the reality of

crimes and victims, “to keep it from happening again...” forgetting the emotions of hate and not awakening ancient sufferings in order to justify future crimes. Finally, the final step to the reconstruction of social cohesion is the creation of an inclusive narrative that describes different meanings, experiences, and perspectives of the past in a single story (Páez & Liu, 2015). Competing representations of the past may be publicly discussed and negotiated in this process. If perpetrators or their supports still hold influential positions in a post-authoritarian society, so the government is pressured towards impunity. On the other side, the victims and their supporters might not accept this outcome and, hence, the democracy is in danger because of the lack of legitimacy (Meyer, 2007).

TCs are being diffused as the best practice for coping with violations committed in authoritarian regimes (Langenohl, 2008). They are instances in which the victims and perpetrators can feel welcome to give their statements, share their experiences, maybe enhancing the sympathy between them (Beristain, 2005). Although the experience of testimony could be risky to survivors in terms of re-experimentation of trauma or even harassment (Brounéus, 2008, 2010), the establishment of a supportive social environment can help victims and witnesses to break the silence about a violent past and decrease the negative emotions (Liem, 2007; Valencia & Páez, 1999). Moreover, understanding the origins of past violence can help to overcome it (Staub et al., 2005) being the salience of memory policies associated with a better evaluation of the social climate (Valencia et al., 2010).

There has been more than fifty official TCs established around the world since the 1970s (see Avruch, 2010; Hayner, 2011). These

commissions were designed because of the impossibility of coping with the violations relying only on the conventional justice processes. This impossibility relies primarily on the challenge of integrating a divided conflictive society, the victims, perpetrators, and supporters while promoting justice for the victims and indict perpetrators.

TCs aim to overcome the negative impact of past collective violence, to promote intergroup empathy, trust, and forgiveness, and to reinforce instrumental and socio-emotional reconciliation (Brown et al., 2008; Nadler, 2006). So, the objective of these commissions is less the persecution of the perpetrators or the compensation of the victims but to establish a cornerstone to a new democratic order. The functions of TCs are: a) making efforts to discover the truth about the period of collective violence, b) recognizing and validating victims' suffering, c) compensating those affected both materially and symbolically, d) contributing to the creation of an inclusive collective memory oriented to the future, e) avoiding new acts of violence, and f) seeking justice, in some cases, like South Africa TC (Gibson, 2004). These functions may contribute to the avoidance of revenge cycles and further crimes, at the same time as preventing collective violence from arising again. They are supposed to reinforce the rule of law and the respect of political rights. They could also contribute to strengthening social norms and reduce future human rights violations (Sikkink & Booth Walling, 2007).

The social context in which TCs are carried out is an essential variable to bear in mind on analyzing their impact. When offered in proper circumstances, transitional justice actions such as the official apologies can reinforce trust, positive intergroup attitudes, and

forgiveness (Blatz & Philpot, 2010). On the other hand, negative contexts can develop negative social climates, which in turn may evoke negative behaviors (Bar-Tal et al., 2007).

As previously stated, a central aspect of these rituals is the construction of shared and inclusive collective memory. This kind of memory refers to the “reconstruction of the past made by members of a group from their interests and present social frameworks” (Halbwachs, 1950/2004). It involves a continuous construction and reconstruction of the past within a society or group and its disputes for hegemony (Olick, 1999; De Rosa et al., 2008). These processes are related to the emotional impact of the events, which lead to more social sharing (Pennebaker & Basanick, 1998).

The memory of past conflicts can reinforce social cohesion as it documents factual atrocities committed by all sides involved. Sharing blame and victimhood prevents selective victimization, in-group idealization, and opens a space towards dialogue (Gibson, 2004). Also, these rituals can fortify social cohesion in a long term process (Lillie & Janoff-Bulman, 2007). In the same way, acknowledge of responsibility by a group for wrongdoings and collective guilt were associated to the support for reparation policies (Brown, González, Zagefka, Manzi, & Cehajic, 2008; Cehajić-Clancy, Effron, Halperin, Liberman, & Ross, 2011; Meernik et al., 2016; Páez, 2010; Valencia, Momoitio, & Idoyaga, 2010) as well as feeling empathy (González et al., 2013). On the other hand, competitive victimhood mediated by high group-identification, low empathy and low trust in the out-group is associated with the justification of past violence and less disposition to forgiveness (Noor et al., 2008). In this sense, a meta-analytical study

showed that collective guilt and trust are the strongest facilitators to forgiveness, while negative emotions and in-group identity are the most substantial obstacles (Van Tongeren et al., 2014). Moreover, in societies that have passed through a very polarized conflict, people may prefer to silence themselves in order to avoid reviving old tensions (Bar-Tal, 2017).

Studies on the effects of TCs on collective memory have shown mixed evidence. On the positive side, Gibson's (2004) study in South Africa found that people who were more willing to accept the TCs version of the truth agreed more with reconciliation, even if this "truth effect" was stronger for dominant and vicarious perpetrator groups. In the same way, Rwanda's Gacaca has had positive inter-group effects, such as more positive out-group stereotypes and a less homogeneity perception although with an affective cost for the victims (Kanyangara et al., 2007; Rimé et al., 2011). However, at the same time, TCs provides opportunities for disclosure of past mistakes they may also threaten a new democratic order provoking hostility and division (Allen, 1999). Another obstacle to the establishment of a new democratic order can be the memory of a glorious past that occurred alongside the atrocities, and it is common to be accompanied by a denial of the violations. For instance, in the Soviet Union, the memory of the victory against the Nazis tend to go along with denials of the atrocities committed by the Stalinism (Langenohl, 2008).

South American Truth Commissions evaluations and their impact on the institutional trust and the socio-emotional climate

In South America, different Truth Commissions were carried out in Argentina (1983-1984), Uruguay (1985 and 2000-2003), Chile (1990-1991 and 2003-2005), Ecuador (1996-1997 and 2008-2010), Peru (2001-2003), Paraguay (2004-2008) and Brazil (2012-2014) for the purpose of documenting facts related to the collective violence perpetrated during the last decades, especially by the dictatorial regimes ruling in these countries (Hayner, 2011). TCs in South America differentiate from the ones carried out in other societies because they mostly investigated dictatorship human rights violations rather than conflicts between civil or ethnic groups. An exception was in Peru, where there were many human rights violations committed by both the right-wing government and left-wing organizations (Espinosa et al., 2017).

Many studies have been done in the countries which carried out TCs in South America to investigate their impact and the aspects related to their positive evaluation in each context. In Argentina, participants presented a positive attitude towards remembering and a positive evaluation about the TC activities as well as a positive perception about its efficacy. TC elicited more negative than positive emotions (Zubieta et al., 2015). In Uruguay, different from other countries, TC was perceived as little effective being the perception of TC effectiveness associated with victimization (Arnosó & Da Costa, 2015). Studies in Chile showed that a better evaluation of the TC work was associated with the rejection of oblivion, institutional trust, and a positive socio-emotional climate. Ideological closeness to the victims

was associated with more social sharing and a better evaluation of TC work and its efficacy (Cárdenas, Páez, et al., 2013; Cárdenas et al., 2014). Similar results were found in Ecuador (Reyes, Grondona, & Rodríguez, 2015) and Paraguay (Arnosó, Muratori, Páez, Zubieta, & Cárdenas, 2014). Finally, even in Peru where there was a tremendous violent conflict, the attitude towards remembering the past and the positive evaluation on the TC effectiveness was associated to more positive socio-emotional climate (Espinosa et al., 2017).

A meta-analytical study across five South American countries (Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay) found that participants agreed with the idea of remembering from the past mistakes rather than forgetting about it (Arnosó et al., 2015). They also presented very high levels of knowledge about the TC activities in Argentina and Uruguay (about 90%) and quite high levels in Chile, Paraguay, and Peru (roughly 50%). However, the social sharing about the TCs activities and their emotional impact were low across the five countries. TCs effectiveness perception was very different across the countries. Meanwhile, in Argentina and Paraguay, most of the samples affirmed to perceive the local TC as effective, in Chile, Uruguay, and especially in Peru, a minority perceived it in this way. The knowledge about the TCs work, their emotional impact, the social sharing about it, the preference for remembering the past as well as the perception of TCs as effective were associated to being a victim or ideologically close to the victims. In the same way, a study in Chile found that generational closeness to the dictatorship period is associated with more emotional reactions and better perception of TC effectiveness (Arnosó, Cárdenas, et al., 2012). Finally, information about the TC

activities is associated with a more positive social climate but also to more negative emotional impact (Arnosó et al., 2015).

To summarize, most of the studies in different South American contexts seems to point out the low impact of TCs, although they are quite well known. Moreover, the knowledge and emotional reaction, as well as the positive evaluation of the TCs and their effectiveness perception, are related to ideological closeness to the victims. However, a positive evaluation of TC outcomes is usually associated with more trust in institutions and positive socio-emotional climate. Finally, alongside with the closeness to the victims, a positive evaluation of TCs achievements seems to associate with a positive attitude towards remembering and emotional reactions on the TC.

In this paper, we aimed to investigate the impact of Brazilian TC, its association with psychosocial variables as well as its effects on the social cohesion.

Across three studies with different samples, we expected that:

Hypothesis 1: information, participation, emotional reactions and social sharing, as well as a more positive view of the TC, will be associated to age (because of time closeness to the dictatorship) and a left-wing political position (the primary victims of dictatorial repression and politically opposed to the regime).

Hypothesis 2: TC effectiveness perception will predict social cohesion, conceived off as rejection of violence, trust in institutions, and positive emotional climate - controlling for age and political position.

Hypothesis 3: TC effectiveness perception will be predicted by information, participation, emotional reactions, social sharing about

the TC and a positive attitude towards remembering - controlling for age and political position.

Method

Sample

Three cross-sectional studies were conducted². The first study was carried out in 2014 with 191 undergraduate students (64.2% women) of the University of Paraíba – João Pessoa. University departments (mostly in social sciences) were contacted to reach the students. Participants were between 18 and 58 years-old ($M = 24.75$, $SD = 9.35$). It is worth to note that this study was conducted during the TC work and just before the TC final report release. In that time, only partial reports had been published.

The second study was conducted, in 2015, with an adult sample of 80 participants (60.0% women) mostly from São Paulo. Participants were contacted at the street or their homes. Age varied from 19 to 74 years-old ($M = 39.86$, $SD = 14.97$).

Finally, the third study replicated the second study with a larger sample of 188 participants (53.2% women) from many cities (most from Florianopolis, João Pessoa, Salvador, and Rio de Janeiro). Participants were contacted at the street, at their homes, and places of

²This paper is a result of three studies carried out independently. That is the reason why they were conducted with different samples. Ideally, longitudinal studies with adult samples would be preferable. Due to time and resource limitations, transversal designs were chosen instead. Comparisons between samples should be taken carefully, especially between the undergraduate and the adult samples because they represent different populations.

work or study. Online questionnaires were also set through e-mail lists. Age ranged from 18 to 85 years-old ($M = 32.47$, $SD = 14.08$).

In the three studies, political positioning was balanced (study 1: $M = 3.97$, $SD = 1.11$; study 2: $M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.58$; study 3: $M = 3.96$, $SD = 1.21$; range 1-7, median point = 4) being similar to the results found in polls about this topic in Brazil (Corporación Latinobarómetro, 2016).

Procedure

The three studies followed all the ethical procedures required for studies with human beings in Brazil. Interviewers were volunteer university students trained in the application of the scale. To be included, participants had to sign an “informed consent” letter that explained the study objectives and guaranteed response anonymity and confidentiality. Participants answered a questionnaire comprised of the questions described below:

Preliminary questions

Socio-demographic information: questions about their age, gender, and city of residence.

Political self-categorization: the scale consisted of seven alternatives, from 1 = extreme left to 7 = extreme right. Respondents were asked: ‘In political matters, people frequently speak of left and right. Where you would place your ideas on the following scale?’

Information and attitudes about the National Truth Commissions

Knowledge about the TC: participants were asked whether they knew about the commission’s work: “Do you know about the activities

of the TC?” (Yes/No). Right after, all participants were invited to read a summary of facts about the dictatorship period and the commission’s activities.

Level of information about the TC: a single item asked participants about how much information they have about the TC. A Likert-type scale was used, ranging from 1 = “very little” to 4 = “very much.”

Participation in TC activities: seven items assessed the participation in TC activities. Examples of items are “Have you seen the TC audiences on TV or news coverage,” “Have you read about the TC in the press” or “Have you participated in rituals for the victims.” A Likert-type scale was used ranging from 1 = “not at all” to 4 = “very much” (study 1: $\alpha = .68$; study 2: $\alpha = .81$; study 3: $\alpha = .76$).

TC overall evaluation: an item adapted from Gibson (2004) to assess respondents’ global attitude and evaluation of the commission’s activity: “Would you say that you: strongly approve of what the TC has done / somewhat approve / somewhat disapprove / strongly disapprove.”

Social sharing of emotions associated with past violence and TC activities: an item adapted from studies on the social sharing of emotions (Rimé, 2009) enquired about the extent to which respondents talk about the commissions’ activities: “Have you ever spoken about TC since the publication of its report?” The response scales ranged from 1 = “not at all” to 4 = “a great deal.”

TC functions effectiveness: respondents were next asked to evaluate three of the primary aims of the commissions, via the following items: “The TC is often said to have several important jobs.

Would you say that it has done an excellent job/pretty good job/pretty bad job/poor job, with regard to (1) “Letting families know what happened to their loved ones” (i.e., aim of providing truth about victims); (2) “Helping to create an inclusive history integrating the 'two nations' or opposing groups in a shared narrative” (aim of creating a comprehensive history) and; (3) “Ensuring that human rights abuses will not occur again in the country. These items were then joined in a single variable named “TC functions effectiveness” (study 1: $\alpha = .80$; study 2: $\alpha = .87$; study 3: $\alpha = .81$).

Emotions associated with past violence and TC activities: participants rated their emotional reactions when thinking about the past events and the commissions’ activities: “To what extent do you feel the following emotions about the TC reports?” They were then given a list, including three positive emotions (Hope, Happiness, and Pride) and four negative emotions (Sadness, Guilt, Anger, Fear, and Shame). Response scales ranged from 1= “not at all” to 7= “a great deal.” Study 1 sample only answered regarding partial reports. Samples in studies 2 and 3 were collected after the final report release and therefore, answered the question regarding the final report. Reliabilities were satisfactory for both positive (study 1: $\alpha = .81$; study 2: $\alpha = .93$; study 3: $\alpha = .87$) and negative emotions (study 1: $\alpha = .80$; study 2: $\alpha = .81$; study 3: $\alpha = .87$).

Attitudes towards remembering: an item assessing the attitudes towards learning from the past mistakes: “about the national past, we should learn from past mistakes to avoid repeating the same mistakes.” A Likert-type scale was used, ranging from 1 = “totally false” to 4 = “totally true.”

Reconstruction social cohesion: the rejection of violence, trust in institutions, and positive emotional climate

Attitude towards violence as a means of social change: a Likert-type item ranging from 1 = totally disagree to 4 = totally agree asked participants whether “sometimes violence is necessary to achieve changes in society.”

Institutional trust: regarding institutional trust, participants were asked to evaluate eight institutions (executive, legislative, courts of justice, local and regional governments, police, army, and churches) on a scale with response options ranging from 1 (“nothing”) to 4 (“a lot”). Factorial principal component analysis using Varimax rotation showed two main factors (study 1: $KMO = .77$, $\chi^2(21) = 427.18$, $p < .001$; study 2: $KMO = .62$, $\chi^2(21) = 131.68$, $p < .001$; study 3: $KMO = .75$, $\chi^2(21) = 490.82$, $p < .001$). The first factor, named “trust in the government” was composed by five items assessing the trust in the institutions more related to the democracy functioning (executive, legislative, courts of justice, local and regional governments) (study 1: $\alpha = .81$; study 2: $\alpha = .55$; study 3: $\alpha = .85$). In the second study, a slightly different factorial structure was found, being the courts of justice, the legislative and the regional government divided between the two factors, probably due to they were in a clash against the executive in the period of the data collection. We opted to use these items together despite their relatively small Cronbach’s alpha in order to make comparisons possible. We used this factor as a measure of trust in government institutions.

Positive-Negative Emotional Climate (PNEC): respondents' perception of the emotional climate was measured using two different instruments. First, four items taken from the Positive-Negative Emotional Climate scale (Páez et al., 1997) were used to evaluate the positive emotional climate ("I think that in general people trust their institutions" and "People show solidarity and help one another; they feel solidarity in general"). A Likert-type response scale was used, with anchors 1 = "Not at all" to 5 = "very much."

Climate Dimension Scale (CD24): four items from the *Climate Dimension Scale* (De Rivera and Páez, 2007) were also used to assess the perception of a positive social climate. Examples of items include: "People feel that the various political groups in this country trust each other and will work together for the progress of the country" or "People have hope because things in this country are improving." A Likert-type response scale was used, ranging from 1 = "Totally disagree" to 7 = "Totally agree."

From the items of the two scales (PNEC and CD24), we created a single variable named positive socio-emotional climate. Firstly, we transformed the punctuations from the two scales into a scale ranging from 0 to 100. Then, we created the new variable obtained from the mean of punctuations for the six items (study 1: $\alpha = .72$; study 2: $\alpha = .64$; study 3: $\alpha = .69$).

Social cohesion: a new variable created from the positive socio-emotional climate, trust in the government institutions, and disbelief in violence as a means of social change. Firstly, we inverted the punctuation for the item of belief in violence. Then, we transformed all the punctuations into a 0-100 scale. Finally, we joined the total of each

dimension into a single variable called social cohesion (study 1: $\alpha = .75$; study 2: $\alpha = .63$; study 3: $\alpha = .79$).

Statistical model

Calculations of descriptive statistics, comparisons of means, and correlation analyses were carried out. Additionally, multiple linear regression analyses were conducted across the three studies in order to identify the variables which could predict the social cohesion and the TC effectiveness.

Results

Study 1

The TC activities were known by 67.3% of the sample of undergraduate students. Level of information and participation on TC activities were below the central point of the scales (see Table 1). TC overall evaluation was positive, and the evaluation of TC functions effectiveness was quite positive, being around the central point. Although participants presented an overall positive evaluation of the TC, they affirmed to have talked little about it and that the TC did not elicit much emotion on them. Participants presented a positive attitude towards learning from the past, and the social cohesion presented a mean about the central point of the scale.

Few TC variables were associated with age. Only the level of information, participation, as well as the negative emotions, showed significant positive associations with age. Social sharing, TC evaluation, and effectiveness perception, as well as positive emotions

on the TC report and preference for remembering, did not show associations with age. Similarly, social cohesion did not show significant associations with age.

On the contrary, political positioning was associated with most of the variables. The left-wing position was associated with TC positive evaluation, negative emotions, and preference for remembering. Weaker associations were also found between left-wing position and participation on TC activities, social sharing about the TC and perception of TC as effective (at $p < .10$). Finally, information and positive emotions on the TC report as well as social cohesion did not show associations with political positioning.

A multiple linear regression analysis was calculated to test whether social cohesion could be predicted based on TC effectiveness perception, controlling the effects of age and political positioning. A significant regression equation was found (see Table 2, also for comparisons between the three studies). TC effectiveness perception was a significant predictor of social cohesion while age and political positioning were not.

Table 1. Correlation matrix of the psychosocial and Truth Commission variables (Undergraduate sample 2014; N=191)

	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Age	18-58	24.75	9.35										
2. Political Position	1-7	3.97	1.11	-.17* [-.30, -.03]									
3. Information	1-5	2.02	1.04	.12* [-.02, .26]	-.06 [-.20, .08]								
4. Participation	1-4	1.25	.28	.23** [.09, .36]	-.11+ [-.25, .03]	.57** [.47, .66]							
5. Social sharing	1-4	1.46	.65	.09 [-.05, .23]	-.10+ [-.24, .04]	.58** [.48, .67]	.59** [.49, .67]						
6. Evaluation	1-4	3.09	.60	.08 [-.06, .22]	-.36** [-.48, -.23]	.08 [-.06, .22]	.16* [.02, .30]	.24** [.10, .37]					
7. Effectiveness	1-4	2.54	.68	-.05 [-.19, .09]	-.12+ [-.26, .02]	.04 [-.10, .18]	.04 [-.10, .16]	.16* [.02, .30]	.40** [.27, .51]				
8. Negative emotions	1-7	2.86	1.33	.21** [.07, .34]	-.24** [-.37, -.10]	.20** [.06, .33]	.26** [.12, .39]	.19** [.05, .32]	.18* [.04, .31]	.20** [.06, .33]			
9. Positive emotions	1-7	2.16	1.37	.06 [-.08, .20]	-.06 [-.20, .08]	.02 [-.12, .16]	.19** [.05, .32]	.10 [-.04, .24]	.23** [.09, .36]	.29** [.15, .41]	.34** [.21, .46]		
10. Remembering	1-4	3.42	.72	.01 [-.13, .15]	-.14* [-.28, .00]	.04 [-.10, .16]	.02 [-.12, -.16]	.07 [-.07, .21]	.36** [.23, .48]	.18** [.04, .31]	.07 [-.07, .21]	-.03 [-.17, .11]	
11. Social cohesion	0-100	46.19	11.62	-.09 [-.23, .05]	-.09 [-.23, .05]	-.12 [-.26, .02]	-.01 [-.15, .13]	-.07 [-.21, .07]	.15* [.01, .29]	.26** [.12, .39]	.17* [.03, .30]	.24** [.10, .37]	.17* [.03, .30]

Note: ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, + $p < .10$ one-tailed. [] 95% C.I. For political position 1 = extreme-left to 7 = extreme-right.

Table 2. Results of the multiple linear regression analysis for social cohesion across the three studies

Variables	Undergraduates 14 (N = 170)			Adults 15 (N = 65)			Adults 17 (N = 115)		
	B	SE (B)	β	B	SE (B)	β	B	SE (B)	β
(constant)	41.36	5.76		19.88	9.50		21.51	8.58	
Age	-0.11	0.09	-.09	-0.03	0.10	-.03	0.07	0.11	.06
Political Positioning	-0.81	0.80	-.08	0.54	1.02	.07	2.34	1.27	.19 ⁺
TC effectiveness	4.22	1.29	.25 ^{**}	5.95	1.82	.42 ^{**}	3.01	1.92	.16
R ²		.08			.17			.05	
ANOVA		4.73 ^{**}			4.10 [*]			1.78	

^{**} $p < .01$, ^{*} $p < .05$, ⁺ $p < .10$

Then, we conducted another multiple linear regression analysis to test whether the attitude towards remembering the past, the emotions elicited by the TC, the level of information and participation as well as the social sharing about the TC could predict the perception of TC effectiveness controlling for age and political positioning. A significant regression equation was found (see Table 3, also for comparisons between the three studies). A positive attitude towards remembering, positive emotions on the TC and social sharing about the TC were found as significant predictors of TC effectiveness perception. Once again, age and political positioning did not show significant effects. Also, information, participation, and negative emotions regarding the TC did not show significant effects on the TC effectiveness perception.

Study 2

The TC activities were known by 81.3% of the sample. Level of information and participation on TC activities were below the median point of the scales (see Table 4). Although participants presented an overall positive evaluation of the TC and its effectiveness, they affirmed to have talked little about it and that the TC did not elicit much positive emotion on them. Negative emotions were about the central point of the scale. Participants presented a very positive attitude towards learning from the past, and social cohesion presented a mean a bit lower than the central point of the scale.

Table 3. Results of the multiple linear regression analysis for Truth Commission effectiveness perception across the three studies

Variables	Undergraduates 14 (N = 151)			Adults 15 (N = 66)			Adults 17 (N = 115)		
	B	SE (B)	β	B	SE (B)	β	B	SE (B)	β
(constant)	2.00	0.44		2.55	1.11		1.32	0.54	
Age	-0.01	0.01	-.08	0.00	0.01	-.04	0.00	0.01	-.06
Political Positioning	-0.04	0.05	-.07	-0.07	0.07	-.12	-0.07	0.07	-.10
Remembering	0.16	0.07	.17*	0.06	0.24	.03	0.30	0.09	.34**
Information	-0.02	0.07	-.04	-0.07	0.13	-.08	0.07	0.11	.07
Participation	-0.28	0.25	-.12	0.27	0.22	.18	0.03	0.29	.02
Negative emotions	0.05	0.04	.10	0.21	0.08	.34*	0.06	0.05	.12
Positive emotions	0.13	0.04	.27**	-0.15	0.07	-.27*	0.08	0.05	.19 ⁺
Social sharing	0.20	0.11	.19*	-0.06	0.13	-.07	-0.01	0.15	-.01
R ²		.17			.39			.25	
ANOVA		3.63**			4.73**			3.47**	

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, ⁺ $p < .10$

Table 4. Correlation matrix of the psychosocial and Truth Commission variables (Adults sample 2015; N=80)

	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Age	19-74	39.86	14.97										
2. Political Position	1-7	3.86	1.58	.06 [-.16, .28]									
3. Information	1-5	2.25	1.03	.06 [-.16, .28]	-.29** [-.48, -.07]								
4. Participation	1-4	1.68	.61	.04 [-.18, .26]	-.29** [-.48, -.07]	.63** [.48, .75]							
5. Social sharing	1-4	1.80	1.08	.02 [-.20, -.24]	-.24* [-.44, -.02]	.68** [.54, .78]	.61** [.45, .73]						
6. Evaluation	1-4	3.33	.96	-.35** [-.53, -.14]	-.33** [-.51, -.12]	.17+ [-.05, .38]	.24* [.07, .44]	.12 [-.10, .33]					
7. Effectiveness	1-4	2.99	.91	-.24** [-.44, -.02]	-.34** [-.52, -.13]	.07 [-.15, .29]	.23* [.01, .43]	.04 [-.18, .26]	.74** [.62, .83]				
8. Negative emotions	1-7	3.44	1.48	-.34** [-.52, -.13]	-.41** [-.58, -.21]	.21* [-.01, .41]	.35** [.14, .53]	.17+ [-.38, .05]	.48** [.29, .63]	.53** [.35, .67]			
9. Positive emotions	1-7	2.06	1.48	.28** [.06, .47]	.24* [.02, .44]	.08 [-.14, .29]	.02 [-.20, -.24]	.12 [-.10, .33]	-.60** [-.72, -.44]	-.44** [-.60, -.24]	-.34** [-.52, -.13]		
10. Remembering	1-4	3.88	.43	.17+ [-.05, .38]	-.01 [-.23, -.21]	-.10 [-.31, .12]	-.22* [-.42, .00]	-.08 [-.29, .14]	.16+ [-.06, .37]	.06 [-.16, .28]	-.01 [-.23, -.21]	-.27* [-.46, -.05]	
11. Social cohesion	0-100	38.66	13.08	-.13 [-.27, .01]	-.08 [-.22, .06]	.07 [-.07, .21]	-.03 [-.17, .11]	.04 [-.10, .18]	.46** [.34, .56]	.40** [.27, .51]	.32** [.19, .44]	-.32** [-.44, -.19]	.20+ [.06, .33]

Note: ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, + $p < .10$ one-tailed. [] 95% C.I. For political position 1 = extreme-left to 7 = extreme-right.

Differently from the findings in the undergraduate sample in 2014, being young was associated with TC positive evaluation, functions effectiveness, and negative emotions on the TC report while being older was associated with reporting positive emotions on the TC report (Table 2). Age was also positively associated with a preference for remembering at $p < .10$. On the other hand, information, participation, and social sharing about the TC did not show significant associations with age. Similarly, social cohesion did not show significant associations with age.

Similarly to the results found on the undergraduate sample, political positioning was associated with most of the TC variables. Information, participation, TC positive evaluation, functions effectiveness, and social sharing were associated with left-wing positioning. In opposition, right-wing positioning was associated with positive emotions elicited by the TC report. Finally, the preference for remembering and social cohesion did not show significant associations with political positioning.

As in study 1, a multiple linear regression analysis was calculated to test whether the social cohesion could be predicted based on TC effectiveness perception controlling for age and political positioning. Once again, a significant regression equation was found (see Table 2). Similar to the results found in study 1, a positive perception of TC effectiveness was found as a significant predictor of social cohesion. Once again, age and political positioning did not show significant effects.

Then, we conducted another multiple linear regression analysis to test whether the attitude towards remembering the past, the emotions

elicited by the TC, the level of information and participation as well as the social sharing about the TC could predict the perception of TC effectiveness controlling for age and political positioning. A significant regression equation was found (see Table 3). Different from results found in study 1 with an undergraduate sample, only the emotions regarding the TC report – both negative and positive, were found as significant predictors of TC effectiveness perception.

Study 3

Since studies 2 and 3 were comprised of adult samples, we compared the means found in these two studies for the TC and psychosocial variables. *Levene's F* test revealed that the homoscedasticity assumption was not met for most of the variables. Therefore we conducted independent-samples *t-tests* adjusted for unequal variances to compare the pairs of means. An alpha level of .05 was used for all subsequent analysis. Effect sizes were calculated through *Cohen's d*.

The means for TC variables were generally lower in the study 3 in 2017 than in the study 2 in 2015. The knowledge about the TC activities was quite low in the adult sample in 2017 (36%) presenting lower mean than in the study 2 ($t(184.66) = 7.92, p = .0001; d = -.100, 95\%CI [-1.07, -.94]$). Means for information ($t(125.78) = 4.92, p = .0001; d = -.71, 95\%CI [-.83, -.49]$), participation ($t(96.36) = 5.56, p = .0001; d = -.89, 95\%CI [-.95, -.76]$) and social sharing about the TC ($t(113.04) = 2.83, p = .006; d = -.45, 95\%CI [-.55, -.21]$) were also lower in the study 3 comparing with study 2 (see Table 5).

Table 5. Correlation matrix of the psychosocial and Truth Commission variables (Adults sample 2017; N=188)

	Range	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Age	18-85	32.47	14.08										
2. Political Position	1-7	3.96	1.21	-.14 ⁺									
3. Information	1-5	1.61	.84	-.08	-.10								
4. Participation	1-4	1.26	.36	-.02	-.08	.49 ^{**}							
5. Social sharing	1-4	1.42	.74	-.16 [*]	-.08	.54 ^{**}	.65 ^{**}						
6. Evaluation	1-4	3.10	.88	-.03	-.21 ^{**}	.13 [*]	.05	.18 [*]					
7. Effectiveness	1-4	2.46	.79	-.01	-.12	.19 ^{**}	.14	.15 [*]	.65 ^{**}				
8. Negative emotions	1-7	2.81	1.72	-.06	-.15 ⁺	.11	.30 ^{**}	.29 ^{**}	.28 ^{**}	.22 ^{**}			
9. Positive emotions	1-7	2.66	1.87	.15 ⁺	.19 [*]	.17 [*]	.08	-.07	.11	.26 ^{**}	-.01		
10. Remembering	1-4	3.35	.89	.01	-.11	.16 [*]	.08	.21 ^{**}	.47 ^{**}	.44 ^{**}	.24 ^{**}	.26 ^{**}	
11. Social cohesion	0-100	40.38	15.17	.04	.16 ⁺	-.05	-.07	-.17 [*]	.13	.13	.09	.27 ^{**}	.21

Note: ^{**} $p < .01$, ^{*} $p < .05$, ⁺ $p < .10$ one-tailed. [] 95% C.I. For political position 1 = extreme-left to 7 = extreme-right.

Contrary to study 2, age showed little association with TC variables. Age was negatively associated with social sharing about the TC. Also, age was positively associated with positive emotions regarding TC report at $p < .10$. Information, participation, TC evaluation and effectiveness perception, negative emotions on the TC report did not show significant associations with age. Accordingly, age was not significantly associated with preference for remembering or social cohesion.

Still contrary to the results found in study 2, political positioning showed little associations to the variables regarding the TC. Only the TC overall evaluation was associated with left-wing political positioning. Also, negative emotions on the TC report was associated with left-wing political positioning at $p < .10$. On the other hand, the positive emotions on the TC report were associated with right-wing positioning. Social cohesion also showed an association with right-wing political positioning at $p < .10$. Finally, information, participation, TC effectiveness perception, and preference for remembering were not associated with political positioning.

As in the studies 1 (undergraduate sample 2014) and 2 (adults sample 2015), a multiple linear regression analysis was calculated to test whether the social cohesion could be predicted based on TC effectiveness perception controlling for age and political positioning. Different from the results found in the two previous studies, a significant regression equation was not found (see Table 2).

Then, we conducted another multiple linear regression analysis to test whether the attitude towards remembering the past, the emotions elicited by the TC, the level of information and participation as well as

the social sharing about the TC could predict the perception of TC effectiveness controlling for age and political positioning. A significant regression equation was found (see Table 3). Accordingly, with study 1 but differently than study 2, preference for remembering was a significant predictor of TC effectiveness perception. A weaker effect of positive emotions on the TC effectiveness perception was also found at $p < .10$.

Discussion

Results across the three studies showed that TC effectiveness perception was related to more social cohesion controlling the effects of age and political positioning. Results also showed the TC effectiveness perception to be related to its impact and a positive attitude towards remembering past mistakes. However, the hypotheses stated were not fully supported.

H1 was partially confirmed. It stated that older age and left-wing political positioning would associate with more TC perceived impact and positive evaluation as well as with preference for remembering due to generational and ideological closeness to the victims.

Age showed inconclusive results being associated with different variables across the three studies. A previous study in Chile found age to be associated with emotional reactions and TC effectiveness perception (Arnosó, Cárdenas, et al., 2012). On this regard, the Amnesty Law encouraged a forgetting about the past and forbidden any trial in the years after the dictatorship, the opposite that occurred in Argentina and Chile, for instance. Therefore, the dictatorship period

remained a forgotten issue in Brazilian society until the establishment of the TC. Thus, we expected that the generations closer to the dictatorship period would exhibit more emotional reactions and evaluate better the TC activities and their outcomes than younger generations. However, the results were inconclusive. In this regard, it is crucial to bear in mind the overall low impact of Brazilian dictatorship and TC compared to other South American countries. Therefore, the dictatorship would be a less critical issue to the overall Brazilian society, not marking the generation who lived it in the same way that it did in other countries. Indeed, collective memory studies showed that the dictatorship is not mentioned as a social event which had an impact in Brazilian participants, contrary to other countries where this event is central to people's lives (Páez et al., 2018). Therefore, TC perceived impact and evaluation would be associated more to political and social attitudes and beliefs than to generation belonging.

Indeed, political positioning showed more evident associations with TC perceived impact and evaluations. Left-wing positioning was associated with more perceived impact and positive evaluations, especially in study 2, with an adult sample in 2015. We could speculate that the time of data collection could have affected these results, but that is hard to demonstrate in the present study. Only the associations of TC overall evaluation and the emotions elicited by the TC report presented clear associations with political positioning across the three studies. These results are in line with previous studies on the TC evaluations in South America (Arnosó & Da Costa, 2015; Arnoso et al., 2015; Cárdenas et al., 2013, 2014; Cárdenas, Zubieta, Páez, Arnoso, &

Espinosa, 2016; Reyes et al., 2015). However, the strength of the associations of political positioning with TC variables varied across the different countries in these studies leading to the idea that contextual factors might be related to a positive evaluation of the TCs.

Study 3 presented less conclusive results respecting the relation of political position to TC perceived impact and evaluations. On that regard, it is essential to remember that study 3 was conducted two years after the TC report release. These results may indicate a long-term perceived impact of the TC activities less anchored on political positioning. In other words, it may indicate a process in which the first to be impacted by the TC activities are those who are ideologically close to the victims but, then, a couple of years later, this impact is spread by the entire political spectrum. That should occur, especially where the TC activities had little impact. Information and social sharing about the TCs are generally low and superficial in South America (Arnosó et al., 2015). In this sense, it is worth remember that, differently from other contexts, Brazilian TC was carried out a long time after the end of the dictatorship (29 years since the end of the dictatorship until the final report release), and the level of violence perpetrated by the dictatorship in Brazil was comparatively lower than in Argentina and Chile for instance. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect a lower impact of the TC in Brazil than in these countries and lower associations of political positioning to TC variables due to its comparative lesser importance to the current social milieu.

However, an important aspect to consider is that our studies were conducted just before the ascension of Jair Bolsonaro as an important political figure in Brazilian politics. The current president Bolsonaro is

very critical against the TC work, and he is an advocator of the dictatorship (G1, 2019a, 2019b). The acknowledge of responsibilities, and the collective guilt for the past wrong-doings are decisive steps towards social cohesion reconstruction (Gibson, 2004; Van Tongeren et al., 2014). Moreover, the construction of a shared narrative about the past is an essential part of the transition to a democratic rule (Páez & Liu, 2015). The denial of the past human rights violations by the president may undermine TC efforts towards the construction of a shared narrative about the past increasing the differences between the narratives as well as their associations with political positioning. Therefore, the recognizing of the past violations risks becoming a matter of opinion rather than a recognized part of history. Besides, the ex-president Dilma Rousseff, who established the TC, was herself a victim of the dictatorship. Thus, in the long run, the TC may be understood as a personal project of hers rather than an official memory policy. Further studies may be conducted in the future to investigate the effect of the TC in the long run considering the current challenging context to transitional justice in Brazil.

By now, our results presented a brighter picture for the reconstruction of the social cohesion more the 30 years after the end of the dictatorship and after the TC activities. The H2 stating that social cohesion would be predicted by TC effectiveness perception controlling by age and political positioning was confirmed in studies 1 and 2, but not in study 3. It. Previous studies found associations between TC effectiveness perception and positive social climate and trust in institutions in other South American countries (Cárdenas et al., 2014; Espinosa et al., 2017). The results found in Brazil may indicate

that the effects of the TC may not last in the long run if continuous memory policies are insufficient. Therefore, as time passes, the TC and past violence seem to be less relevant to social cohesion. The aftermath of a TC is the time when the lessons about the past are established. Thus, if the society can construct a shared narrative from which to learn lessons to avoid future conflicts, then, the mistakes may not be repeated (Páez & Liu, 2015). Otherwise, if the TC revive hostility and division (Allen, 1999) increasing competitive victimhood and in-group identification (Noor et al., 2008), thus the past violence may be justified by the people ideologically identified with the perpetrators, which threatens the new democratic order. Results across the three studies suggest that political positioning does not have a substantial effect on social cohesion. In other words, people's trust in the institutions, evaluation of social climate, and rejection of the use of violence seem to be independent of which political party is currently running the country.

Partially confirming H3, we found support for the idea that the TC perceived impact and a positive attitude towards remembering the past are essential variables to evaluate a TC as effective. These associations were also found in other studies (Arnosó et al., 2015; Cárdenas et al., 2013, 2014). However, our study furthers the knowledge about this topic finding evidence that more TC perceived impact and a positive attitude towards remembering the past could predict a better evaluation of TC effectiveness independently of the political positioning and generational belonging. Nonetheless, different variables were associated with TC effectiveness perception across the three studies. In studies 1 and 3, positive emotions regarding the TC

report and a positive attitude towards remembering the social past were significant predictors of TC effectiveness perception. However, in study 2, only the emotions (negative and positive) regarding the TC report were significant predictors. This result might have occurred due to a transitory emotional effect of the TC report rehearsal.

Moreover, the effects found for positive emotions were in the opposite direction than in studies 1 and 3. Considering this result and the ones found for the associations of political positioning with TC perceived impact and evaluation, we could speculate that, in the time of the report release, left-wing participants would be more impacted by the negative content of the report. The details of numerous human rights violations could have led them to declare more negative and less positive emotions than the center or right-wing participants in the period of the report release. As times passes, a long-term positivity bias may act to turn the emotions of left-wing participants about the TC report into more positive ones, recognizing its positive outcomes.

Therefore, the primary variable to perceive the TC as effective at the time of the TC report release seems to be feeling more negative and less positive emotions. That might occur due to the impact of the human rights violation reported. However, in the long run, the primary variable to perceive the TC as effective seems to be holding a positive attitude towards remembering a violent past. Also, feeling positive emotions regarding the TC outcomes may have effects to evaluate them as positive.

Conclusions

We investigated Brazilian Truth Commission social perceived impact, evaluations and effectiveness perception across three studies, the first with undergraduate students in 2014 during TC work and just before its final report release, the second in 2015 just after the report release and the third in 2017, both with adult samples. Across the three studies, results showed a low perceived impact of the Brazilian TC. Nonetheless, participants evaluated the commission's work positively as well as its effectiveness. However, some differences were found between the studies. Results from the studies 2 and 3 with adult samples showed that in 2015 (close to the Truth Commission report release) the level of information, participation, social sharing, and the negative emotional reaction was higher than in 2017. Ideological closeness to the victims (left-wing) was related to more TC perceived impact and a positive evaluation of its effectiveness. However, results from multiple regression analysis showed that TC effectiveness perception was a predictor of social cohesion even controlling political positioning and age.

Comparing Brazilian results with those from other contexts is tortuous. TCs are mechanisms designed to improve the relations between groups once in conflict. Nonetheless, each society has its particularities, and the conflicts which led to the establishment of a TC are distinct around the world. For instance, it is hard to compare Brazilian TC with Rwanda's. In that country, genocide took place opposing an ethnic group to kill the other. Another example is South

Africa, wherein the apartheid regime people received different legal treatment based on their ethnicity.

In South America, different kinds of conflict took place. Following ideological conflicts in the Cold War, Coup d'état, authoritarianism and state persecutions occurred against people holding different ideas of society. The groups in the conflicts were ideological, and most people lived their lives unaware of the political conflicts and restrictions. At that time, roughly half of the population lived in rural areas, and about a third were illiterate (IBGE, 2019a, 2019b). In Brazil, the effect of “not get involved” is stronger due to the low impact of the violence, its hidden character (that means there were no public executions such as in Chile) and the little power of guerrillas. This fact and the official propaganda during this period may explain why people who lived during the regime may hold less critical or even positive representations about it than younger people (for a study on the social representations about the dictatorship in Brazil see Sá et al., 2009). That may also explain why we did not find clear associations between age and TC perceived impact and evaluations. We expected to find these relations due to the generational closeness to the subject, which could lead to more interest in discovering the truth. Nonetheless, the younger criticism against the dictatorship may have canceled the effect of generational closeness on the TC perceived impact and evaluations.

Thus, TC discussion in Brazil is more focused on the narrative about the past (and its use in current politics) than in reconciliation. Establishment of the factual truth about past violations is a crucial step towards the construction of a stable democracy. However, previous

conflicts may arise if this “truth” is not known or accepted by large parts of the population, especially those holding different political opinions. In that sense, our results provide hope showing that the TC can have effects on the social cohesion independently of political positioning.

The polarization of a society is based on holding different beliefs about its underlying foundations. Construction of a shared narrative about the past, recognizing wrong-doings and compromising to respect human rights has been shown as an effective way to found a new democratic order and to prevent future conflicts. Further studies on the social representations of history may help to understand the effects of TC in the long run to achieve these goals.

5



Why some people want the restoration of an authoritarian regime?

*Psychosocial variables associated with the social
representations of a dictatorial past in Brazil*

This picture was taken during a protest against the military regime on June, 21, 1968 in Rio de Janeiro. The episode is known as Bloody Friday.

According to the photographer Evandro Teixeira, the man being beaten is a Medicine student who hit his head against the curb and died (G1, 2018). The identity of the student is unknown.

His physical similarity with the ex-president Lula da Silva (currently serving a sentence for bribery and money laundering) led some people to use this image to argument and celebrate that the militaries did a good job persecuting “evil” people who worked against the country’s interests.

The social representations of history are usually linked to political positioning, generation belonging and level of education.

We investigated whether the trust in the democracy institutions, the information about the past or the support of violence as a means to achieve social changes could be other important variables in representing the past.

**Why some people want the restoration of an
authoritarian regime?**

*Psychosocial variables associated with the social
representations of a dictatorial past in Brazil*

Anderson Mathias¹, Darío Páez¹, Elza Techio²,
Brigido Camargo³, Carolina Alzugaray⁴, Albert Moraes⁵

¹University of the Basque Country – Spain

²University of Bahia – Brazil

³University of Santa Catarina – Brazil

⁴Santo Tomás University – Chile

⁵University of Paraíba – Brazil

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Abstract

A Truth Commission was carried out in Brazil (2012-2014) to ascertain the “official truth” about the authoritarian military regime (1964-1985). However, its report was released during a political crisis which ended up with the president who supported it impeached and an advocator of the regime elected. A previous study in the 2000s showed that positive representations of this period were the minority, being associated with older age, low education, and conservative political positioning. Our study had three main aims: first, to analyze changes in the social representations of history after the Truth Commission work; second, to investigate the psychosocial variables that could predict positive and negative emotions regarding the regime and, third, to analyze whether these psychosocial variables and positive representations of the regime predict the opinions about a hypothetical regime restoration. A cross-sectional representative sample ($N = 200$) answered questions about their knowledge, emotions, and opinions about the past as well as psychosocial questions. They also answered to an association task. Results showed the existence of critical social representations of the past despite the presence of positive elements. Older age, low education, conservative political opinions, but also belief in violence as a means of social change and trust in the government were significant predictors of positive emotions on the regime. Agreeing with the regime restoration was predicted by mentioning positive words on the association task, belief in violence as a means of social change, and conservative political opinions. We

discuss the contribution of these findings to the social representations of history studies.

Keywords: social representations of history, collective memory, social memory, transitional justice, authoritarianism, Brazilian dictatorship.

An authoritarian military regime ruled in Brazil for 21 years (1964-1985). As occurred in many countries, the Brazilian military regime³ was a consequence of the Cold War ideological conflicts between left-wing socialists or communists and right-wing conservative and nationalists (see Agassiz, 2007). During this period occurred human rights violations such as torture and extra-judicial executions as well as censorship and restriction of political rights. The transition towards democracy was characterized by an Amnesty Law established in 1979, which has prevented any judicial prosecution (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b). An extended period of relative forgetting about the dictatorship period characterized Brazilian politics in the following years.

Only in 2012, a Truth Commission was carried out to investigate the human rights violations during the military regime. Although it did not aim to conduct any prosecution, Brazilian Truth Commission concluded that the regime was responsible for 434 executions or disappearances and roughly 1800 cases of torture as well as many other human rights violations (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b). The Truth Commission main goal was to bring out the factual truth about the authoritarian period. However, the

³ The use of the term “military regime” in Brazil is commonly linked to a conservative position about this period which usually denies the existence of a dictatorship. We decided to use it because: 1. it was the term used in previous studies about this subject (Sá et al., 2009); 2. it was also used in our study to assess participants emotions and opinions in order to replicate Sá et al. (2009) study. The use of this term should not be interpreted as an endorsement by the authors of the idea that there was not a dictatorship between 1964 and 1985 in Brazil.

acceptance of this “truth” depends on the knowledge people construct about the past, their memories, and identities.

Making sense of the past: collective memory and social representations of history

There are two main approaches to study the knowledge people collectively construct about a past event: the first is based on the notion of collective memory and the second on the social representations theory. Both approaches present many points of contact (Banchs, 2014) being part of the social memory field (Mathias & Páez, 2018).

Collective memory

The collective memory paradigm has been established towards the idea that the past is a reconstruction, an interpretation of the events through the present frameworks (Halbwachs, 1925/1994, 1950/2004, see also Hirst, Yamashiro, & Coman, 2018; Sá, 2007). For instance, the generations who lived the military regime in Brazil would be continuously reconstructing their memories of this period to accommodate it in their current identities and positions. However, younger generations make sense of the past differently. They could not remember it because they cannot rely on any direct experience. They only have access to the memories that society keep alive, for instance, through the individual transmission of stories, the registers of the past preserved or the historiography on textbooks. Therefore, younger generations do not remember but represent the past. That is the reason

why the social representations theory could be an exciting approach to study this phenomenon.

Social representations theory

The social representations theory is a useful approach to analyze changes in the perception of social objects. It is especially useful to analyze how scientific theories (e.g., historiography), are assimilated and transformed by common sense. The social representations are defined as:

"a system of values, ideas and practices with a twofold function; first, to establish an order which will enable individuals to orient themselves in their material and social world and to master it; and secondly to enable communication to take place among the members of a community" (Moscovici, 2009, p.21).

The social representations emerge when an unknown object, phenomenon, or idea starts to be communicated. If the object is relevant, the unfamiliarity engenders an effort to give it some meaning. Therefore, an anchoring process reduces the unknown idea to a previous schema. For instance, younger generations can represent the military regime anchoring it on their representations about the current politics. Another process, called objectification, acts to transform the general abstract concept in a more concrete image, quickly remembered and diffused (e.g., Che Guevara as a symbol of the communist revolution). Once created, the social representations serve

as tools to understand, participate, and compete in the social arena (Moscovici, 2009, 1961/2012).

A society can handle many different social representations about an object: hegemonic (social consensus), emancipated (different representations broadly accepted and respected) and polemical (representations which conflict against the social consensus) (Abric, 1976, 1994; Breakwell, 2015). The transformation of a social representation seems to depend on the existence of a consistent minority that defies the established consensus, creating conflict and discussing the ideas once undoubted (Del Prette, 2012; Moscovici, 1979).

The structural approach to the Social Representations Theory

The structural approach based on the central core theory (Abric, 1976, 1994) is a useful approach to investigate the social representations of polemical issues. It allows analyzing the relative contribution of the polemical elements to the overall social representation of the object. The analysis is based on the idea that the social representations are organized in a dual system comprised of a core and a periphery. The core determines the general meaning of the representation. It seeks stability, and so it is hard to change.

On the other hand, the periphery is comprised of elements linked to the central core but more malleable having the function of adapt to changing realities. It protects the central system from abrupt changes (Abric, 2001; Flament, 1989). Therefore, while the central core maintains the elements that are pivotal for the group identity, the periphery is more malleable.

Social changes may trigger a transformation in the structure of social representation. The changes in elements on the central core usually indicate a transformation on the social representation meaning (Moliner & Abric, 2015). However, studies on social representations of polemical issues might handle with social desirability, i.e., people sometimes do not speak out what they think. This phenomenon is known as the “mute zone” of the social representation and may require particular strategies of research (Abric, 2003; Flament, 1999; Guimelli & Deschamps, 2000; Menin, 2006).

Social representations of history, violence, and authoritarianism

The creation of a social consensus about the past could be tortuous because people differ in many social and individual aspects such as political positioning, access to information, or generation belonging. The construction of knowledge about history are related to psychosocial variables such as: the consequences of the event (Bobowik et al., 2014), current political issues (Langenbacher, 2010; Liu, Sibley, & Huang, 2014; Snider, 2018), generation belonging (Muller et al., 2016; Sá et al., 2009), group identification (Montiel, 2010; Obradovic, 2016; Sen & Wagner, 2005), educational level (Sá et al., 2009) as well as political positioning (Arnosó, Arnoso, & Pérez-Sales, 2012; Arnoso, Páez, et al., 2015; Herranz & Basabe, 1999; Manzi, 2006; Muller et al., 2016; Sosa, Delfino, Bobowik, & Zubieta, 2016).

Support of authoritarianism may be another vital variable to take into account on studying the social representations of dictatorships (Carvacho et al., 2013; Napier & Jost, 2008). Support of

authoritarianism is related to low political awareness (Geddes & Zaller, 1989) and perceived threat (Stevens, Bishin, & Barr, 2006), being more common in unequal societies, such as Brazil (Solt, 2012) where people present less political knowledge (Grönlund & Milner, 2006). Although studies have found associations of conservative political positioning with support of authoritarianism, this relation was found as mediated by intolerance values and low education (Napier & Jost, 2008).

Analyzing the transformations on the social representations of the military regime in Brazil seems to be an excellent opportunity to deepen the knowledge about the psychosocial processes involved in representing the history and particularly an authoritarian past. History is usually distorted to achieve political goals (Bar-Tal, 2007; Bobowik et al., 2014; Langenbacher, 2010; Liu et al., 2014) and in contexts of conflicts, different representations of history can arise to legitimize each group's actions shaping perceptions of threat and intentions as well as driving collective behavior (Bar-Tal, 2007; Liu & Hilton, 2005; Páez et al., 2008; Wohl & Branscombe, 2008). Shared social representations of history recognizing past harms might be achieved for groups once in conflict serving to construct a culture of peace (Liu, Wilson, McClure, & Higgins, 1999; Sibley & Liu, 2007). However, the current circumstances might influence political opinions being periods of crisis challenging to democracy foundations. Support of democracy may quickly drop during crises. For instance, between 2015 and 2016, support of democracy in Brazil dropped from 54% to 32% due to a political and economic crisis (Corporación Latinobarómetro, 2016).

Moreover, economic crises are related to far-right positions rise (Georgiadou et al., 2018).

Studies on social representations of history in Brazil have shown that people had little information about the authoritarian regimes that occurred in the 20th century. For instance, about Getúlio Vargas' authoritarian regime (1937-1945), only 14% of adults and 58% of elders (who have lived it) affirmed to have any information about it (Naiff et al., 2008). Education and political positioning, no matter which one, were associated with more information and to consider Getúlio Vargas as a dictator. Regarding the military regime (1964-1985), the social representations were found to be mainly negative, considering it a period of deaths, torture, censorship, and oppression (Sá et al., 2009). However, many young participants presented incorrect information such as the presence of war, and there was a minority representation that considered the regime as a positive period of order and safeness. This positive representation was prevalent mainly in elders, conservative, and less educated people. Social representations legitimizing the dictatorship as well as positive emotions on it were also found in Argentina, but they were a minority even among conservative participants (Arnosó, Arnoso, et al., 2012). We partially replicated Sá et al. (2009) study in order to verify changes in the social representations of the military regime in Brazil after the Truth Commission work. We also aimed to further the knowledge about the psychosocial variables associated with the representations of an authoritarian past.

We posit the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: the central core of the social representations of the military regime will be more favorable to the regime than in the past because of the recent rising of the conservative political view in Brazil. That is, the frequency of positive words from the inductor stimulus “military regime” will be higher, and these words will be mentioned firstly comparing to the results found by Sá et al. (2009).

Hypothesis 2: positive emotions about the military regime will be predicted by: older age, low education, conservative political opinions, belief in violence as a means of social change, low trust in the government institutions and absence of information about the military regime by family or friends. The negative emotions about the military regime will present the opposite trend.

Hypothesis 3: agreeing with the military regime restoration will be predicted by the same variables predicting positive emotions plus mentioning positive words about the regime.

Method

Participants

The representative sample consisted of 200 Brazilian (54.3% women), from 18 to 85 years-old ($M = 31.54$, $SD = 13.84$). Data were collected between October 2016 and April 2017. Participants were contacted at their homes and places of work or study. There was a similar proportion of participants with low (high-school or less) (57.4%) and high (undergraduates and graduated) educational level (42.6%). Political positioning distribution was slightly center-left ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 1.36$, range 1-7). This distribution is similar to the results

found in general polls about this topic in Brazil (Corporación Latinobarómetro, 2018). Participants who affirmed being direct victims of the military regime were 5.8%, indirect victims (participants who had relatives or friends who were victims) 14.4% and no affected participants were 79.8%.

Materials

Preliminary questions: participants were questioned about socio-demographic variables such as age, sex, and level of education (elementary, high-school, undergraduate, and graduated).

Political Positioning: Likert-type scale from 1= extreme left to 7 = extreme right.

Political opinions: we asked dichotomous questions about four social issues. These questions are usually asked in surveys to define political positions in Brazil (Datafolha, 2017). The items asked participants whether they agree or disagree with: death penalty, reduction of legal age, legalization of marijuana, and legalization of abortion. Disagreeing with marijuana and abortion legalization as well as agreeing with the death penalty and reduction of legal age scored for conservative. The opposite opinions scored for liberal. Then, we created a new variable for the sum of political opinions ranging from 1 = extreme liberal (four liberal opinions) to 5 = extreme conservative (four conservative opinions).

Belief in violence as a means of social change: a Likert-type item ranging from 1 = totally disagree to 4 = totally agree asked participants whether “sometimes violence is necessary to achieve changes in society.”

Word association task: participants were asked to mention three words that come to mind when they think about the “military regime.”

Information about the military regime: dichotomous items to assess whether or not they had any information about the military regime and the sources of that information (school, family/friends or mass media). Considering that the information in school and the access to mass media could be different across generations, we used only information by family/friends to assess the socialization on the military regime.

Emotions associated with the military regime: Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = nothing at all to 7 = very much composed by two subscales, one for the positive emotions of hope, joy, and pride ($\alpha = .83$) and the other for the negative emotions of anger, guilt, sadness, fear and shame ($\alpha = .83$).

Opinions about the military regime and its restoration: two dichotomous items assessing whether or not participants agree there were positive aspects of the military regime and whether or not they agree with a hypothetical military regime restoration.

Opinion about violations of human rights during the military regime: two dichotomous questions asking participants if there were violations of human rights during the regime and, in case of an affirmative answer, if the violations were legitimate.

Knowledge of the Truth Commission’s activities: a dichotomous item to assess if participants had any information about the Truth Commission.

Truth Commission evaluations: four Likert-type items to assess participants’ overall evaluation of the Truth Commission as well as the

evaluations about the achievement of its three main goals (find the truth, create an integrative narrative about the past and prevent future conflicts). Scale range was from 1 = totally disagree to 4 = totally agree. The four items were joined in one variable named Truth Commission positive evaluation ($\alpha = .83$).

Trust in institutions: participants were asked to evaluate nine institutions (political parties, local, regional and national governments, legislative and courts of justice, armed forces, police, and churches) on a scale ranging from 1 (“nothing”) and 4 (“a lot”). Factorial principal component analysis using Varimax rotation showed two main factors ($KMO = .83$, $\chi^2(36) = 625.27$, $p = .0001$). The first factor named “trust in the government” was comprised by six items assessing the trust in the institutions more related to the democracy functioning (executive, legislative, courts of justice, local and regional governments) ($\alpha = .85$). The second factor, named “trust in the military and churches,” was comprised of three items assessing the trust in the armed forces, the police, and the churches ($\alpha = .73$). We used the items of the first factor as a measure of trust in the government.

Statistical strategy

Data from the word association task were analyzed through a prototypical analysis conducted in the software IRAMUTEQ. This analysis allows investigating the central core of the social representation and their peripheral elements by visualizing them in four quadrants (see Abric, 1994; Vergés, 1992). The first (left-upper) representing the central core of the social representation, includes the elements most and firstly mentioned. The second and third quadrants

(respectively right-upper and right-lower) represent the peripheral elements. They represent the elements mentioned lastly. Finally, the fourth quadrant (left-lower) depict the contrast zone elements. It comprises the evocations with low frequencies but evocated firstly. It means that these themes, although being a minority in the general sample, they are essential for those who evocated them. It may indicate a subgroup with a representation opposing the consensus (Abric, 1994). This challenging representation has the potential to change the overall social representation of the object if they achieve to increase the number of supporters (Del Prette, 2012; Moscovici, 2011). The *corpus* was constructed in the Open Office Calc software considering the order of evocation in order to analyze it through the matrix analysis method (Camargo & Justo, 2013). Similar words such as “The *United States*” and “The *US*” were patronized and words or expressions evocated only one time were excluded from the analysis.

Moreover the prototypical analysis, we carried out correlation, multiple and logistic regression analyses to investigate the psychosocial variables related to positive or negative emotions on the authoritarian regime as well as to the opinion about its restoration. For this analysis, the words mentioned by each participant on the association task were categorized by three independent judges as positive, negative, or neutral regarding the regime. There were no conflictive categorizations between the judges. The neutral words were assigned as missing, and the variable named “positive words” was considered as dummy variable being 0 = negative and 1 = positive.

Results

Descriptive results

A significant part of the sample affirmed to have no information about the military regime or to evaluate the regime somewhat positively; some of them agreed with its restoration (see Table 1). Participants affirmed to have information primary in school, followed by mass media and family or friends. The Truth Commission was somewhat unknown. However, most of the participants evaluated it positively when given a little explanatory text about the commission's goals and results.

Table 1. *Percentages for information and opinions about the military regime and the Truth Commission (N = 200)*

Variable	Yes	No	Missing
Overall information regime	76.0	22.0	2.0
Information in school	58.0	40.0	2.0
Information by family/friends	41.0	57.0	2.0
Information by mass media	47.0	50.5	2.5
Truth Commission knowledge	27.5	67.0	5.5
Truth Commission positive evaluation	67.5	21.5	11.0
Positive aspects regime	34.5	52.0	13.5
Violations human rights	86.0	7.5	6.5
Violations legitimate	11.0	76.5	12.5
Restoration military regime	12.5	74.0	13.5

Note: Truth Commission evaluation was assessed (after an explanatory text being given) by a 4-point Likert-type item ranging from 1 = total disapproval to 4 = total approval. Responses in 1 or 2 were coded as “negative evaluation” while responses on 3 or 4 were coded as “positive evaluation”.

Likewise, opinions about the military regime were mostly critical. Most of the participants agreed with the idea that the regime violated human rights, and these violations were not legitimate.

However, about a third believes the regime had positive aspects. Despite that, only a minority expressed their agreement with a military regime restoration.

Accordingly, a paired sample t-test ($t(129) = 8.09, p = .0001$) showed that negative emotions on the military regime had significant higher mean than positive emotions (see Table 2). There was no significant difference between the means for sadness and anger ($t(147) = 0.92, p = .362$). On the other hand, participants affirmed to feel significant more anger than shame ($t(145) = 3.10, p = .002$) but similar levels of shame and fear ($t(146) = 0.72, p = .471$). In turn, the mean for fear was significant higher than the mean for guilt ($t(141) = 6.71, p = .0001$). Hope did not present significant differences to guilt ($t(139) = 0.74, p = .460$) or pride ($t(143) = 0.34, p = .738$). Finally, the mean for pride was significant higher than the mean for happiness ($t(143) = 3.24, p = .001$).

Table 2. Means, standard deviations and confidence intervals for the emotions on the military regime ($N = 200$)

Emotion	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	95% Confidence Interval	
				<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
Sadness	1-7	4.42	2.29	4.06	4.77
Anger	1-7	4.17	2.26	3.81	4.52
Shame	1-7	3.67	2.26	3.31	4.02
Fear	1-7	3.57	2.11	3.24	3.91
Guilt	1-7	2.19	1.76	1.90	2.48
Hope	1-7	2.07	1.78	1.78	2.36
Pride	1-7	2.06	1.80	1.77	2.35
Happiness	1-7	1.61	1.40	1.38	1.84
Negative emotions	1-7	3.56	1.65	3.24	3.81
Positive emotions	1-7	1.85	1.41	1.62	2.08

Structure of the social representations of the military regime

A prototypical analysis was conducted to investigate the structure of the social representations of the military regime. Participants were asked to mention up to three words that come to mind when they hear about “military regime.” The majority (79.5%) were able to mention at least two words. Results showed that the central core of the social representation of the military regime is mostly comprised of critical terms (see Table 3). However, the positive term “order” was found in the central core, indicating an outstanding minority representation. The first periphery is comprised of elements that are surrounding the central core with high frequency but evocated lastly. It is comprised only by negative terms regarding the military regime. The second periphery includes the most peripheral elements of the social representation, obtaining low frequency, and being evocated lastly. Results showed in this quadrant the presence of positive words such as “respect,” “peace” and “liberty” indicating that the positive representation of the military regime may be in construction from these elements plus the “order” found in the central core. Finally, the contrast zone presents the elements that may comprise a minority representation challenging the central core.

The contrast zone presented a pattern similar to the central core. The majority of words are critical to the military regime, but positive words such as “good” were also found.

Table 3. *Quadrants for the prototypical analysis regarding the inductor stimulus “military regime”*

		<i>Central Core</i>			<i>First Periphery</i>		
		<i>Low rank ≤ 1.9</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>High Rank > 1.9</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Rank</i>
<i>High freq. > 8.48</i>	Torture	43	1.5	Repression	13	2.0	
	Censorship	32	1.9	Death	12	2.2	
	Violence	28	1.9	Injustice	11	2.3	
	Dictatorship	24	1.4	Pain	10	2.2	
	Order	16	1.8	Fear	9	2.3	
	Oppression	12	1.3	Prison	8	2.2	
	Authoritarianism	12	1.9				
		<i>Contrast Zone</i>			<i>Second Periphery</i>		
		<i>Low rank ≤ 1.9</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>High Rank > 1.9</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Rank</i>
<i>Low freq. < 8.48</i>	Sadness	8	1.9	Respect	5	2.3	
	Coup	6	1.6	Suffering	5	2.5	
	Police	6	1.9	Inequality	4	2.5	
	War	8	1.6	Control	4	3.0	
	Rigidity	5	1.8	Weapons	3	2.0	
	Authority	4	1.5	Persecution	3	2.2	
	Shame	4	1.5	Power	3	2.2	
	Good	2	1.0	Corruption	3	2.6	
	Rights Violations	2	1.5	Absence liberty	3	2.6	
	Totalitarianism	2	1.0	Peace	3	2.7	
	Government	2	1.5	Intolerance	2	2.0	
				Liberty	2	2.0	
			Politics	2	3.0		

These results should be interpreted carefully. About a fifth of the sample was excluded from the analysis, due to they were not able (or did not want to) mention more than one word regarding the military regime. Thus, we split the data from participants who mentioned two or three words (79.5%) from those who did not mention more than one word (20.5%) to check if there were systematic differences between them. Then, we conducted a correlation analysis to investigate the associations of mentioning words with psychosocial variables.

Indeed, we found associations of mentioning words regarding the military regime to most of the psychosocial variables investigated. Results showed associations of not mentioning words to: being man ($r = -.14, p = .031$), young ($r = -.17, p = .012$), low educated ($r = -.29, p = .0001$), conservative ($r = .24, p = .001$), belief in violence as a means of social change ($r = .14, p = .028$), no information about the regime ($r = -.33, p = .0001$) negative Truth Commission evaluation ($r = -.36, p = .0001$), positive emotions on the military regime ($r = .21, p = .007$) and agreement with its restoration ($r = .32, p = .0001$). Thus, we should be careful in analyzing the results obtained, remembering they represent those who were willing to talk about this subject. In the same way that may exist an active minority trying to change the social representations of the military regime, it also seems to exist a latent passive minority who tend to silence themselves about this topic.

Correlation analysis and regression models

We conducted correlation analyses (Pearson and point bi-serial) to investigate the psychosocial variables associated with different opinions and emotions regarding the military regime.

To check whether political self-identification was similar to political opinions, we compared the self-reported political positioning to the opinions about social issues. Associations were not as high as we could expect ($r = .33, p = .001$). To understand this result, we checked frequencies on crosstabs. Firstly, we transformed the seven-point political positioning scale into a five-point one (the same range used for political opinions), summing up the most extreme scores (1 and 2

for left-wing and 6 and 7 for right-wing). Therefore, scores on 1 and 2 comprised the new “extreme-left,” as well as scores on 6 and 7 comprised, was the new “extreme-right.” Crosstabs results showed that few participants who had liberal opinions about social issues (scores in 1 or 2) identified themselves as right-wing (scores in 4 or 5) (5%). However, many participants who identified themselves as left-wing had conservative opinions (32%). Some participants may have identified themselves thinking more about economic than social issues. Consequently, we chose to conduct the analyses considering the political opinions rather than the political self-identification due to our study is concerning political and social instead of economic issues.

Results showed few associations of sex and age with the variables regarding the military regime (see Table 4). Being man was slightly associated with considering that there were positive aspects of the regime. Sex also showed associations with belief in violence as a means of social change and institutional trust. Being a man was positively associated with belief in violence as a means of social change while being a woman was associated with more trust in the government.

Table 4. *Correlation matrix of the variables related to the social representations of the military regime (N=200)*

	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Sex	1-2	1.54	.50											
2. Age	18-85	31.54	13.84	.03 [-.12, .18]										
3. Education	1-4	2.46	.97	.06 [-.10, .21]	.07 [-.09, .23]									
4. Political opinions	1-5	2.93	1.36	-.13 [-.28, .02]	.10 [-.06, .25]	-.47** [-.59, -.33]								
5. Belief in violence	1-4	1.98	.98	-.27** [-.40, -.13]	-.06 [-.21, .09]	-.13* [-.28, .03]	.15* [.00, .29]							
6. Info family/friends	1-2	1.42	.50	.08 [-.07, .22]	.09 [-.06, .23]	.22** [.06, .36]	-.30** [-.43, -.15]	.09 [-.05, .23]						
7. Trust government	1-4	1.73	.55	.23** [.08, .37]	.08 [-.10, .26]	-.10 [-.26, .06]	.00 [-.16, .16]	-.17* [-.31, -.02]	.11 [-.04, .26]					
8. Negative emotions	1-7	3.53	1.66	.15 [-.03, .32]	.13 [-.05, .30]	.30** [.11, .46]	-.34** [-.49, -.17]	-.27** [-.42, -.10]	.34** [.18, .48]	.21* [.03, .37]				
9. Positive emotions	1-7	1.85	1.38	-.10 [-.27, .07]	.20* [.03, .36]	-.32** [-.48, -.14]	.36** [.20, .50]	.18* [.01, .34]	-.19* [-.34, -.03]	.15* [-.02, .32]	-.25** [-.40, -.08]			
10. Positive aspects	1-2	1.40	.49	-.14* [-.29, .02]	-.13 [-.28, .03]	-.05 [-.22, .12]	.18* [.02, .33]	.23** [.08, .37]	.08 [-.07, .23]	.07 [-.09, .23]	-.29** [-.44, -.12]	.37** [.21, .51]		
11. Positive words	1-2	1.12	.33	-.07 [-.23, .09]	-.01 [-.17, .15]	-.27** [-.42, -.10]	.26** [.10, .41]	.33** [.18, .46]	-.11 [-.26, .04]	-.06 [-.22, .10]	-.45** [-.58, -.30]	.62** [.50, .72]	.38** [.24, .51]	
12. Restoration	1-2	1.15	.36	-.07 [-.22, .08]	.01 [-.14, .16]	-.29** [-.43, -.13]	.32** [.18, .45]	.35** [.21, .47]	-.14* [-.28, .01]	-.03 [-.18, .12]	-.38** [-.52, -.22]	.47** [.32, .59]	.33** [.18, .46]	.43** [.29, .55]

Note: ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, one-tailed. [] 95% C.I. Sex was coded as 1 = male, 2 = female. Education was coded as 1 = elementary, 2 = high-school, 3 = undergraduate, and 4 = graduate. Political opinions ranged from 1 = extreme-left to 5 = extreme-right. Positive aspects and words were coded as 1 = negative, and 2 = positive. Restoration was coded as 1 = disagree, 2 = agree.

In the same way, age also showed little associations with the variables regarding the military regime. Being older only showed a positive association with reporting positive emotions on the military regime. On the other hand, high educational level and liberal political opinions were associated with many of the variables investigated. They were positively associated with information about the regime by family or friends and negative emotions. On the other side, lower education and conservative opinions were related to belief in violence as a means of social change, positive emotions, and words about the regime as well as agreeing with its restoration. Likewise, belief in violent changes was associated with positive emotions and opinions about the regime and its restoration, moreover being negatively correlated to trust in the government. Still, information about the regime was associated with the emotions on it and the opinions about its restoration. Have information about the military regime by family or friends was negatively correlated to reporting positive emotions on it and to agreeing with its restoration. Surprisingly, trust in the government did not show association with many of the variables investigated, such as information, positive aspects, positive words, and restoration of the regime. However, it is interesting to observe that trust in the government was positively correlated to both positive and negative emotions on the regime. Finally, the variables regarding the military regime showed medium to large associations with each other, although they represent different dimensions, and were assessed by different means.

In order to understand better these results, we conducted multiple and logistic regression analyses to investigate which

psychosocial variables predict changes for the punctuation for negative and positive emotions on the military regime and the agreement with its restoration.

A linear multiple regression analysis was carried out to investigate which psychosocial variables predict the positive emotions regarding the military regime. We firstly tested a more parsimonious model on the Enter mode including only the three variables found in previous research (Sá et al., 2009) as associated to the social representations of the military regime: age, political opinions, and education. Then we tested a second model, also on the Enter mode, including three psychosocial variables we hypothesized as related to positive emotions on an authoritarian regime: belief in violence as a means of social change, low trust in the government institutions and no information about the regime by family or friends. Assumptions were met, and significant regression equations were found for both models (see Table 5). The second model explained more variance than the first. On the first model, age, low education, and conservative political opinions showed significant effects on the positive emotions on the military regime. However, on the second model, only age and belief in violent changes were significant predictors of positive emotions at $p < .05$, while conservative political opinions and trust in the government were significant predictors at $p < .10$. Information about the regime was not found as a significant predictor of positive emotions.

Table 5. Regression of the predictors upon the positive emotions on the military regime

Predictors	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Constant	1.41	0.64		0.54	0.84	
Age	0.02	0.01	.18*	0.02	0.01	.20*
Education	-0.59	0.28	-.21*	-0.43	0.28	-.16
Political opinions	0.24	0.10	.24*	0.20	0.10	.19 ⁺
Belief in violence				0.27	0.13	.19*
Trust in government				0.42	0.22	.17 ⁺
Information				-0.37	0.26	-.13
<i>R</i> ²		.19			.24	
F for change in <i>R</i> ²		8.59**			5.75**	

Note: ⁺*p* < .10, **p* < .05

We conducted a similar analysis to investigate the effects of the same psychosocial variables on the negative emotions regarding the military regime: firstly testing a model with three predictors (age, education, and political opinions) and secondly, a more comprehensive model with the six predictors. Once again, assumptions were met, and significant regression equations were found for both models, the second one explaining more variance than the first (see Table 6). On the first model, liberal political opinions showed significant effects on the negative emotions on the military regime at *p* < .05, while education predicted changes on the punctuations for the negative emotions at *p* < .10. On the other hand, the second model only showed significant effects of little belief in violence as a means of social change and information about the regime on the negative emotions at *p* < .05. Still, a significant effect of trust in the government on the negative emotions was found at *p* < .10.

Table 6. *Regression of the predictors upon the negative emotions on the military regime*

Predictors	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Constant	3.00	0.82		1.83	1.02	
Age	0.02	0.01	.15	0.01	0.01	.09
Education	0.63	0.35	.19 ⁺	0.55	0.34	.16
Political opinions	-0.32	0.13	-.26*	-0.20	0.13	-.17
Belief in violence				-0.37	0.15	-.22*
Trust in government				0.46	0.27	.15 ⁺
Information				0.77	0.32	.23*
<i>R</i> ²		.17			.29	
F for change in <i>R</i> ²		6.90**			6.65**	

Note: ⁺*p* < .10, **p* < .05

Then, we conducted a logistic regression analysis to investigate the effects of the psychosocial variables on agreeing with the military regime restoration. This time we tested a first model including as predictors age, education, political opinions, but also positive words on the association task. Then we tested a second model including as predictors believe in violence as a means of social change, trust in the government, and information about the regime. Assumptions were met, and significant regression equations were found for both models (see Table 7). The second model explained more variance than the first. On the first model, positive words and conservative political opinions were found as a significant predictor of agreeing with the regime restoration. On the second model, positive words and belief in violence as a means of social change were significant predictors of agreeing with the regime restoration at $p < .05$, while conservative political opinions was a significant predictor at $p < .10$. These results suggest an important relationship between the social representations of history, current political opinions, and support of authoritarianism.

Table 7. Logistic regression analysis of agreement with the restoration of the military regime

Predictors	Model 1				Model 2			
	B (SE)	95% CI for Odds Ratio			B (SE)	95% CI for Odds Ratio		
		Lower	OR	Upper		Lower	OR	Upper
Constant	-4.69 (2.01)				-8.20 (3.27)			
Age	0.01 (0.02)	0.96	1.01	1.05	0.02 (0.03)	0.97	1.02	1.07
Education	-1.08 (1.21)	0.27	2.94	31.75	-0.62 (1.37)	0.13	1.86	27.15
Political opinions	0.96* (0.46)	1.07	2.61	6.39	0.84+ (0.46)	0.94	2.32	5.72
Positive words	2.89* (0.84)	0.01	0.06	0.29	-2.60* (1.00)	0.01	0.08	0.53
Belief in violence					1.03* (0.33)	1.39	4.43	14.18
Trust government					0.08 (0.78)	0.24	1.08	4.97
Information					0.33 (1.04)	0.09	0.72	5.47
χ^2	28.94*				38.01*			
df	4				7			
Cox & Snell R^2	.23				.30			
Nagelkerke R^2	.48				.62			

Note: + $p < .10$, * $p < .05$

Discussion

This study had three main goals: first, to examine transformations on the social representations of history about an authoritarian past in Brazil after the work of a Truth Commission; second, to investigate the psychosocial variables related to positive and negative emotions regarding the regime, and third, to analyze whether these psychosocial variables and positive social representations about the regime would predict agreeing with its restoration.

Hypothesis 1 proposing that the central core of the social representations of the military regime would be more favorable to it than in the past was not confirmed. Results from the prototypical analysis presented an overall similarity with those found by Sá et al. (2009). Although a revisionist perspective which represents the authoritarian past as a positive period of order, discipline, respect, and even liberty has been increasing, the social representations of the military regime seem to be still mainly critical. However, the term “order” present in the Brazilian national flag was part of the central core, indicating that a nationalistic representation about the past may be rising in Brazil. Hence, this study could have taken a picture about the beginning of a transformation on the social representations of history in Brazil.

Also, the results suggest that some people who hold positive representations about the regime silence themselves, not mentioning words on the association task. Specifically, we analyzed if not mentioning words regarding the regime was associated with psychosocial variables. Indeed, we found that low education,

authoritarianism, Truth Commission negative evaluation, positive emotions on the regime, and positive opinion about the military regime restoration were associated with not mentioning words regarding the regime. This result may point out the existence of a mute zone on the social representation of the military regime in Brazil, that means, a representation that is not expressed because it is counter-normative although they do exist and influence peoples behaviors (Abric, 2003; Flament, 1999; Guimelli & Deschamps, 2000; Menin, 2006). These studies about the mute zone are usually about prejudice. Finding it in a study about social representations of history can open up new paths on this field. Further investigations may take into account special techniques and precautions to assess these kinds of contents reducing normative pressure. For instance, future studies could ask participants to answer according to what they think are other group members' opinion (Menin, 2006).

Results partially supported hypothesis 2. According to H2, the first model showed that positive emotions on the military regime were predicted by lower education, older age, and conservative political opinions. These results were similar to those found by Sá et al. (2009) indicating that the emotions about the past could be a dimension aligned with the social representations of history. Indeed, our results showed high correlations between mentioning positive words and reporting positive emotions on the regime. Although political positioning is considered as an essential variable on representing the military regimes in Latin America (Arnosó, Arnosó, et al., 2012; Arnosó, Páez, et al., 2015; Herranz & Basabe, 1999; Manzi, 2006;

Muller et al., 2016; Sosa et al., 2016), our results indicate that other variables are also important.

Previous studies have shown the association of educational level to political knowledge (Grönlund & Milner, 2006; Schuman & Corning, 2000). Also, education could be a moderator in the relation of political awareness and support for authoritarian policies (Geddes & Zaller, 1989). In Brazil, less education was associated with considering the former authoritarian president Getúlio Vargas (1930-1945) as not being a dictator (Naiff et al., 2008). Low education and low interest in politics were also related to positive representations of the military regime (Sá et al., 2009). It is crucial to bear in mind that our sample is slightly more educated than the general population (due to they needed to be literate to answer the questionnaire). Still today, the majority of the population did not achieve to complete high-school education (IBGE, 2017). Although a significant part of our sample affirmed to have some information about the military regime, they did not usually talk about it. That does not seem to be an essential issue for many Brazilian. Accordingly, results on the collective memory of lived events show that the military regime was not mentioned as an important event by people most of the people who lived it (Páez et al., 2018).

The associations of age to positive emotions on the past regime provides support for the idea that the generational cohorts hold different collective memories, emotions or representations of the past because some people have direct experience to rely on whilst others have indirect knowledge through formal education or oral transmission (Halbwachs, 1950/2004; Mannheim, 1952; Muller et al., 2016;

Reulecke, 2008). Moreover, the effects of age on positive emotions regarding an authoritarian past are in line with previous findings (Muller et al., 2016) indicating that those who lived the events hold qualitatively different representations than those who did not. The formers need to understand what happened and justify their positions, while younger generations are not so involved, constructing their knowledge about the past based on the information learned at school or by oral transmission. In that sense, providing information (especially emotionally charged) about the military regime to young people seems to have effects on the personal implication on this topic (Lemes & Jorge, 2014).

According to H2, the second model testing six variables as predictors of positive emotions on the military regime showed significant effects of belief in violence as a means of social change, alongside with older age and conservative political opinions. These results seem to corroborate the idea that support of authoritarianism is a crucial variable to be aware of when investigating political issues (Carvacho et al., 2013; Napier & Jost, 2008). However, contrary to H2, when we tested the second model, education did not show significant effects on positive emotions. Moreover, trust in the government institutions showed a significant effect on the opposite direction than proposed on H2, and information about the regime did not show significant effects. At first glance, results for the association of trust in the government with positive emotions on the regime could be interpreted based on the period of data collection, right after President Rousseff's impeachment. Those who feel positive emotions about the regime and negative opinions about Rousseff (who was a militant

against the regime) would have expressed more trust in the government during this period. Nonetheless, this explanation loses support noting that we did not find associations between political opinions and trust in the government. Moreover, trust in the government showed positive associations with both negative and positive emotions regarding the regime. These results seem to point out the existence of a disillusioned or disengaged part of the sample, which distrusts the government institutions and does not express any emotion about the past, either positive or negative.

Regarding the negative emotions on the regime, we did not find fully support for H2. This hypothesis stated that the negative emotions would be predicted by younger age, high education, liberal political opinions, little belief in violence as a means of social change, high trust in the government institutions and information about the regime by family or friends. Confirming H2, the results for the first model showed significant effects of education and liberal political opinions on the negative emotions about the regime. However, contrary to H2, age did not show significant effects on negative emotions. An explanation could be that it occurred because the negative representation of the military regime is more consensual than the positive, being shared more equally across generations while the positive representations may be restricted to nostalgic conservative elders. However, the second model tested including more variables showed that the negative emotions were predicted by little belief in violence as a means of social change, information about the regime by family or friends and trust in the government institutions. Thus, political beliefs and information seem to have stronger effects than

socio-demographic variables such as age and education on the negative emotions about the authoritarian past. This result is similar to those found in previous studies (Naiff et al., 2008; Sá et al., 2009) which found that political engagement could be associated to a more critical representation of past authoritarian regimes.

Regarding hypothesis 3, the results provided support for the idea that holding positive social representations about the authoritarian past could represent a threat to democracy. H3 stated that agreeing with the military regime restoration would be predicted by mentioning positive words about the regime, older age, low education, conservative political opinions, belief in violence as a means of social change, low trust in government institutions and absence of information about the regime by family or friends. According to H3, mentioning positive words on the association task, alongside with conservative political opinions and belief in violence predicted agreeing with the authoritarian regime restoration. However, contrary H3, we did not find significant effects of age, education, trust in the government institutions, and information about the regime on agreeing with its restoration. It is important to note that agreeing with military regime restoration is a minority position (12.5%). This proportion is similar to that found in polls about the preference for authoritarian regimes (Corporación Latinobarómetro, 2016). Therefore, we could expect this position to be held by radicalized individuals. We did not have enough sample size to carry out analyses considering only the conservative participants. Nonetheless, our results suggest that, although most of those who agree with the regime restoration are conservative, agreeing with the regime restoration are restricted mainly

to those individuals who support violence as a means of social change and hold positive social representations about the authoritarian past. The rise of authoritarianism might be due to the context of social crisis (Georgiadou et al., 2018) or a cultural shift (Inglehart & Norris, 2016).

Conclusions

The study presented aimed to investigate the transformations on the social representations of history in Brazil as well as the psychosocial variables associated with reporting positive or negative emotions on the authoritarian military regime (1964-1985) and the support of a hypothetical restoration of a military rule.

Similarly to previous studies, a word association task showed an overall critical representation of the military regime. However, positive minority representation was present. Still, we found associations of many psychosocial variables such as conservative political opinions or belief in violence as a means of social change to not mentioning words regarding the military regime, suggesting the existence of a mute zone on the social representations of history. Further studies should use special techniques to assess this kind of data.

Positive and negative emotions about the past were predicted by psychosocial variables. Previous studies have shown that political positioning, generation belonging, and education are associated with the emotions and social representations about the past. Our study furthers the knowledge about this topic showing the role of other psychosocial variables such as belief in violence as a means of social

change, trust in the government institutions, and information about the past. Finally, we also showed the effects of the social representations of history and these psychosocial variables on the current support of authoritarian solutions.

Our study presented only a first glance at the different variables which could be related to the social representations of an authoritarian past. This study was limited in some aspects. Firstly, the sample was quite small and contained many missing responses. Therefore, we might have failed to detect some small effects. Secondly, some variables assessed by a single item such as belief in violence as a means of social change or have information about the past by family or friends could be investigated deeply. Future studies could develop and validate scales to assess these elements.

Further studies may also investigate the different dimensions (emotional, attitudinal, and political action) on representing history as well as their association with the social representations of other political objects such as the ideas of democracy and authoritarianism. Future studies could also investigate whether different levels of political knowledge and engagement are associated with supporting democracy or authoritarianism.

6



**The association between Truth Commissions evaluation,
emotional climate and institutional trust:**

*Comparison and meta-analysis of surveys in six South American
countries*

The “Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo” is a movement of Argentinean mothers who campaigned for their children who had been disappeared during the military dictatorship, pursuing the government for answers.

The recognition of the right to memory and to discover the truth was stronger in Argentina than in other countries. Also, the Truth Commission is evaluated better in Argentina.

In Chapter 4, we discovered that the Truth Commission's effectiveness perception might associate with social cohesion variables such as trust in institutions and positive socio-emotional climate in Brazil.

These associations are stronger in other countries.

The level of violence, the time between the end of the dictatorship and the Truth Commission establishment, and current support of democracy are some of the variables which could moderate these associations.

The association between Truth Commissions evaluation, emotional climate and institutional trust:

Comparison and meta-analysis of surveys in six South American countries

Anderson Mathias¹, Darío Páez¹, Agustín Espinosa², Salvador Sandoval³, Carolina Alzugaray⁴, Maitane Arnosó¹, Manuel Cárdenas⁵, Silvia da Costa¹, Carlos Reyes⁶, Bernard Rimé⁷ & Elena Zubieta⁸

¹University of the Basque Country - Spain

²Pontifical Catholic University of Peru

³Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo - Brazil

⁴Santo Tomás University - Chile

⁵Valparaíso University - Chile

⁶Polytechnic Salesian University - Ecuador

⁷University of Louvain - Belgium

⁸University of Buenos Aires – Argentina

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Abstract

This paper analyzes Truth Commissions (TCs) evaluations and its association with positive emotional climate and trust in institutions in six countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Peru). We expected that TCs positive evaluations would be associated with positive emotional climate and trust in institutions- controlling for age and political position. The sample consisted of 4442 volunteer participants (53.3% women), 13 to 90 years-old ($M = 37.4$, $SD = 15.7$). Participants answered a questionnaire comprised of scales which evaluated their knowledge, evaluations, emotions, and social sharing about the TC, as well as the socio-emotional climate and the trust in institutions. Comprehensive Meta-analysis procedure and multiple linear regression were carried out. Positive evaluation of the TCs was related to trust in institutions ($\bar{r} = .23$ random model) and a positive socio-emotional climate ($\bar{r} = .31$, random model). Political positioning and age showed limited effects on TC positive evaluation despite being significantly associated with most of the TC variables. Associations of TC positive evaluation with socio-emotional climate and high trust in institutions were found to be positively moderated by contextual factors such as the higher perception of democracy and general trust in the government in each country. Results are discussed comparing with previous studies on TCs outcomes around the world.

Keywords: truth commissions, transitional justice, social representations of history, meta-analysis, South America.

This article examines Truth Commissions – TCs – impact and its relation with psychosocial variables in six South American countries, which lived with dictatorial regimes and repressive periods during the second half of the 20th century (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Peru). Duration, span, as well as the level of violence, were different in each country. The first country ruled by a dictatorship in this period was Paraguay in 1954, and the last violent period was in Peru (1980-2000) which includes Fujimori's regime period. Chile and Argentina had the most repressive governments; while Peru underwent a Civil War with high levels of violence by both, right-wing government and left-wing groups (Cárdenas et al., 2016; Espinosa et al., 2017).

Truth Commissions: overcoming a violent past

After the end of the dictatorships, the new democratic governments instituted TCs in order to deal with the violent past. TCs have been created in many countries in order to address human rights violations by violent regimes or those resulting from internal armed conflict. Since the 1970s, more than fifty official commissions have been organized worldwide (Hayner, 2011). In South America, different TCs were created in Argentina (1983-1984), Uruguay (1985 and 2000-2003), Chile (1990-1991 and 2003-2005), Ecuador (1996-1997 and 2008-2010), Peru (2001-2003), Paraguay (2004-2008) and Brazil (2012-2014) for the purpose of documenting facts related to the collective violence perpetrated during the dictatorships. Different approaches were adopted in these countries: amnesty and forgetting

(Brazil), TC without judicial processes or with limited judicial processes (Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay), and TC with judicial processes (Argentina and Chile) (see Table 1).

Table 1. *Political violence and Truth Commissions in South America*

Country	Period of violence	Death Toll	TC report	Time elapsed	Trials
Argentina	1976-1983	8960	1985	2 years	Yes
Brazil	1964-1985	434	2014	29 years	No
Chile	1973-1990	3428	1991/2005	1 year	Yes
Ecuador	1984-1988	85	2010	22 years	Limited
Paraguay	1954-1989	337	2008	19 years	Limited
Peru	1980-2000	69000	2003	3 years	Limited

Source: Based on Hayner (2011) updated with Brazilian data (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b).

Transitional Justice can be defined as a set of measures and processes adopted to deal with the consequences of mass human rights violations in the aftermath of regime changes, violent conflicts, wars, and other historical injustices that were the consequence of undemocratic regimes, colonization, occupation, and so on (David, 2017). TCs are a mechanism of transitional justice created to help the transition from a violent political regime to a democratic and peaceful one. They are temporary, aiming to investigate, not necessarily judging, human rights violations by government and/or opposition forces (Hayner, 2011). Common functions of TCs are: a) making efforts to discover the truth about the period of collective violence, b) recognizing and validating victims' suffering, c) compensating those affected both materially and symbolically, d) contributing to the creation of an inclusive collective memory oriented to the future, e)

avoiding new acts of violence, and f) in some cases, seeking justice, like in South Africa (Gibson, 2004).

The aim of TCs is to overcome the negative impact of past collective violence, to promote intergroup empathy, trust, and forgiveness, and to reinforce instrumental and socio-emotional reconciliation (Nadler, Malloy, & Fisher, 2008). They are intended to strengthen social cohesion and norms, recovering institutional trust (Beristain, Páez, Rimé, & Kanyangara, 2010; Páez, 2010), and fueling reconciliation or reconstruction of social cohesion (Gibson, 2004). From a psychosocial perspective dealing with past collective violence implies: a) the construction of a common integrative narrative of the past collective violence; b) overcoming negative emotions such as revenge, anger, fear and sadness, and changing the out-group image, increasing intergroup trust and forgiveness as well as positive collective emotions such as hope and solidarity; c) Increasing confidence in institutions; d) increasing values of tolerance and universal justice and rejection of violence as a legitimized means for social change and political struggle (Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2011; Espinosa et al., 2017; Gibson, 2004; Nadler et al., 2008).

Truth Commissions' effects

Studies show overall positive outcomes to societies which carried out TCs. Two quasi-experimental longitudinal studies showed positive effects on cohesion and intergroup relations of transitional justice rituals. Hamlets that perform restorative activities alike to transitional justice rituals in Sierra Leona increased social capital by

comparison to control hamlets – effects were found for the middle and long term (Cilliers et al., 2016). Rwanda’s Gacaca has also had positive inter-group effects, such as more positive out-group stereotypes and a less homogeneous (“they are all similar”) or more differentiated, individualized view of the ethnic out-group (Kanyangara et al., 2007; Rimé et al., 2011). More specifically, confirming that the creation by a TC of a shared collective memory of the past that integrates different views strengthens social cohesion, people who agreed with the past narrative drawn up by the South African TC showed a more favorable attitude towards reconciliation – at least in three of four ethnic groups (Gibson, 2004).

However, TC activities sometimes increase victims negative symptoms such as post-traumatic stress and, as well as increases in personal and collective negative valence emotions like anger, fear, sadness depression (Cilliers et al., 2016; Kanyangara, Rimé, Páez, & Yzerbyt, 2014). They also show some positive emotional effects, like a decrease in shame in the case of victims and increase in guilt in perpetrators (Cilliers et al., 2016; Rimé et al., 2011). These results and a global review (David, 2017) suggest that TCs have positive social effects but also imply a personal and collective affective cost, even if some positive emotional outcomes are also included.

Truth Commissions’ impact and evaluation in South America

Previous studies in five South American countries (Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay) have shown that people usually agree with the idea that it is necessary to learn from past mistakes, though this idea is more accepted among left-wing than right-wing

participants (Arnosó et al., 2015). TCs knowledge, social sharing, perceived efficacy as well as the negative emotional impact, were higher among who were victims and leftists. Most of the participants claimed to know TCs work, though only half of the participants considered them as effective. Similar results were found for the achievement of goals like victims' relatives knowing the truth, to achieve justice, to prevent new violence (44%) and to create a shared history (43 to 52% agrees). Participants who affirmed knowing about TCs' work perceived it as more effective and showed a higher negative emotional impact. Higher perception of the Truth Commission efficacy was associated with a better perception of the socio-emotional climate (Arnosó et al., 2015). In Argentina, Chile and Peru approval of TC was related to the satisfactory achievement of their aims, such as to help to achieve the truth, to create an integrative history and to prevent new violations, as well as with a positive evaluation of official apologies (Cárdenas et al., 2016).

The present study sets out to examine the associations between political attitudes, social beliefs, and emotions and people's attitude toward the reparatory transitional justice activities related to the repression by the military dictatorships in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and civic-military regimes in Ecuador and Peru.

The knowledge about the TC's work, the emotional reactions and social sharing about it, as well as the perception of TCs effectiveness are hypothesized to be associated with age (because of time proximity to events) and to left-wing political positions (the main victims of dictatorial repression and politically opposed to conservative military regimes).

However, we also expect a positive view of TCs to be related to reconstruction of social cohesion variables such as the perception of positive socio-emotional climate but also the personal trust in the government institutions and the rejection of political violence.

Method

Sample and Procedure

The sample consisted of 4442 volunteer participants (53.3% women) with an age range of 13 to 90 years ($M = 37.4$, $SD = 15.7$). Data were collected in six South American countries: Chile (28.8%), Peru (26.0%), Paraguay (18.7%), Brazil (10.0%), Argentina (10.3%) and Ecuador (6.2%). All studies but Brazil have been previously published as specific results for a single nation (Arnosó, Cárdenas, Páez, & Beristain, 2014; Arnosó & Da Costa, 2015; Arnosó, Muratori, Páez, Zubieta, & Cárdenas, 2014; Bobowik et al., 2017; Bombelli, Muratori, & Zubieta, 2018; Espinosa et al., 2017; Reyes, Grondona, & Rodríguez, 2015) – see chapter 4 in this thesis for Brazilian study.

The instrument was applied by specially trained college students. Participants read a consent letter that guaranteed their confidentiality and anonymity and were informed about the study's goals. Once they had agreed to participate in the study by signing the consent letter, they filled in a paper-and-pencil questionnaire individually. Data were collected between October 2010 and March 2017. It was usually collected in the country's most populous urban areas and in the zones most exposed to collective violence: Santiago, Valparaíso, Concepción and Antofagasta (Chile), Buenos Aires, Mar del Plata, Córdoba y Tucuman (Argentina), Asunción (Paraguay),

Quito y Guayaquil (Ecuador), Lima, Piura y Huamango (Peru), Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Salvador, Florianópolis and João Pessoa (Brazil). A similar survey was also conducted in Uruguay but it was excluded because the Uruguayan TC was extremely limited (Arnosó & Da Costa, 2015), the sample was homogeneously center-left, and when included in analysis, this survey appears as an outlier.

Material

The questionnaire comprised five sets of variables. Preliminary questions asked participants about socio-demographic variables (age, gender, city of residence), political positioning, and their level of exposure to past collective violence. The second set of questions examined participants' knowledge of and attitudes toward the TC in their country. The third set of scales measured respondents' perception of the country's socio-emotional climate. A fourth set more directly addressed participants' personal experience in relation to the re-examination of the past and the TC activities. A final set addressed trust in institutions and belief in political violence as a means of social change. Below we describe all of these instruments in a more detailed fashion.

Preliminary questions

Socio-demographic information: respondents answered questions about their age, gender, and city of residence.

Political self-categorization: this question asked about political preference on a scale from extreme left (1) to the extreme right (7). Respondents were asked: 'In political matters, people frequently speak

of left and right. Where you would place your ideas on the following scale?’

Exposure to past violence: this section examined the impact of past collective violence on participants. It included questions aimed at differentiating between “direct victims,” “indirect victims,” and persons “unaffected” by political violence. These categories were derived from respondents’ answers to the following two questions: “Do you consider yourself a victim of the violence perpetrated by the state or its agents between (period of the dictatorship in that country)?” (Yes/No) and “Are there any victims of state violence or its agents between (period of the dictatorship in that country) among your family members or close friends?” (Yes/No). Participants who responded affirmatively to the first question or to both questions were categorized as direct victims, those who responded affirmatively only to the second question were considered as indirect victims, and those who responded negatively to both questions were considered as “unaffected.”

Information and attitudes about the Truth Commissions

Level of information: participants were asked if they knew about the work of the commissions: “Do you know about the activities of the TC?” (Yes/No). All participants were invited then to read a short summary of facts about the collective violence and the commissions’ activities.

Overall attitude: this scale was adapted from Gibson (2004) and intended to assess respondents’ overall attitude to and evaluation of the commissions’ activity through the following question: “Would

you say that you: Strongly approve of what the TC has done/Somewhat approve/Somewhat disapprove/Strongly disapprove.”

Assessments of the Commissions' outcomes: respondents were next asked to evaluate three major aims of the commissions, via the following items: “The TC is often said to have several important jobs. Would you say that it has done an excellent job/pretty good job/pretty bad job/poor job, with regard to: (1) “Letting families know what happened to their loved ones” (i.e., aim of providing truth about victims), (2) “Helping to create an inclusive history integrating the 'two nations' or opposing groups in a shared narrative” (aim of creating a comprehensive history), and (3) “Ensuring that human rights abuses will not occur again in the country (aim of guaranteeing no recurrence of the violence). The questionnaires included one more question about the perception of justice to bring the perpetrators into trials, but it was not used in this meta-analytical study due to the fact that in some of the countries there were no trials. The items were joined in a single variable called TC effectiveness perception. Reliability scores were satisfactory (Argentina: $\alpha = .81$; Brazil: $\alpha = .90$; Chile: $\alpha = .78$; Ecuador: $\alpha = .82$; Paraguay: $\alpha = .83$; and Peru: $\alpha = .82$).

Emotions and social sharing

Emotions associated with the past violence and TC activities: participants rated their emotional reactions when thinking about past events and the commissions' activities: “To what extent do you feel the following emotions about the collective violence period and the TC?” They were then given a list, including three positive emotions (Hope,

Happiness, and Pride) and four negative emotions (Sadness, Guilt, Anger, Fear, and Shame). Response scales anchored as 1= “not at all” and 7= “a great deal” were used. Reliability scores were satisfactory for both positive (Argentina: $\alpha = .83$; Brazil: $\alpha = .85$; Chile: $\alpha = .83$; Ecuador: $\alpha = .79$; Paraguay: $\alpha = .87$; and Peru: $\alpha = .69$) and negative emotions (Argentina: $\alpha = .76$; Brazil: $\alpha = .82$; Chile: $\alpha = .76$; Ecuador: $\alpha = .81$; Paraguay: $\alpha = .79$; and Peru: $\alpha = .76$).

Social sharing of emotions associated with past violence and TC activities: two questions adapted from studies on the social sharing of emotions (Rimé, 2009) enquired about the extent to which respondents talk about past events and the commissions' activities. “Have you ever spoken with people around you” (1) “about TC since the publication of its report?”; (2) “about past violence since the publication of the TC report?”. The response scales ranged from 1= “not at all” to 4= “a great deal.”

Attitudes towards remembering and oblivion: two items (1) assessing the attitudes towards learning from past mistakes or, (2) that old wounds should not be re-exposed. A Likert-type scale was used, ranging from 1 = “totally disagree” to 7 = “totally agree.”

Indexes of reconstruction of social cohesion

The following indicators constitute a dimension of reconstruction of social cohesion; this includes positive socio-emotional climate, trust in institutions and rejection of political violence.

Perceived Positive Emotional Climate: respondents' perception of the positive socio-emotional climate in their country was measured

using two different instruments. First, two items taken from the *Positive-Negative Emotional Climate scale* (Páez, Ruiz, et al., 1997) were used to evaluate the positive emotional climate (“I think that in general people trust their institutions” and “People show solidarity and help one another; they feel solidarity in general”). A Likert-type response scale was used, with anchors 1 = “Not at all” to 5 = “A great deal.” Secondly, four items from the *Climate Dimension Scale* (De Rivera & Páez, 2007) were used to assess the perception of positive emotional climate. Respondents were asked how far they agreed with the following statements: (1) “People in the country feel secure that there is enough food, water, medicine, and shelter for themselves and their families, and that they will continue to have these goods”; (2) “People feel that the various political groups in this country trust each other and will work together for the progress of the country”; (3) “People from different political, ethnic and religious groups trust each other in this country”; (4) “People have hope, because things in this country are improving”. A Likert-type response scale was used, ranging from 1 = “Totally disagree” to 7 = “Totally agree” (7). Using standardized scores of PNEC and CD-24 items a global index of positive emotional climate was constructed. Reliabilities were satisfactory (Argentina: $\alpha = .79$; Brazil: $\alpha = .67$; Chile: $\alpha = .79$; Ecuador: $\alpha = .79$; Paraguay: $\alpha = .70$; and Peru: $\alpha = .71$).

Trust in institutions: regarding institutional trust, participants were asked to evaluate seven institutions (national, regional and local executive governments, legislative, political parties, courts of justice and, army) on a scale with response options ranging from 1 (‘nothing’) to 4 (‘a lot’). The total score was used as an index of trust in

institutions. Reliabilities were satisfactory (Argentina: $\alpha = .81$; Brazil: $\alpha = .82$; Chile: $\alpha = .87$; Paraguay: $\alpha = .78$; and Peru: $\alpha = .84$). In Ecuador this question was not in the questionnaire.

Belief in violence as a means of social change: an item asked, “What is your level of agreement with the following statement? Sometimes it is necessary to use violence to achieve change in society. Response options ranged from strongly disagree = 1 to totally agree = 4. Once again, in Ecuador this question was not in the questionnaire.

Reconstruction of social cohesion: trust in institutions and disagreement with violence as a means of social change were included because together with high positive emotional climate are indexes of a successful reconstruction of social cohesion (Espinosa et al., 2017; Gibson, 2004), for scales references see Cardenas et al. (2016) in this journal. Reliabilities were satisfactory in each country (Argentina: $\alpha = .84$; Brazil: $\alpha = .74$; Chile: $\alpha = .87$; Paraguay: $\alpha = .77$; and Peru: $\alpha = .77$).

Results

Descriptive results

Political positioning was balanced across the countries similar to general regional surveys (Corporación Latinobarómetro, 2016). Most of the participants claimed not to have been affected by the violence in the past, although an important part of the samples reported being direct or indirect victims. Detailed sample features by country are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Truth Commissions' impact: sample features by country*

Country	N	Year of Survey	Political Positioning (%)			Victimization (%)		
			Left	Center	Right	Direct	Indirect	Unaffected
Argentina	458	2012-13	21.6	55.3	23.0	9.4	18.3	72.3
Brazil	443	2014-17	23.2	51.8	25.0	5.2	15.7	79.1
Chile	1278	2010-11	49.2	34.5	16.3	23.9	33.4	42.7
Ecuador	277	2010-11	32.0	40.8	27.2	15.9	18.5	65.6
Paraguay	832	2011-12	19.6	52.0	28.5	16.3	24.0	59.6
Peru	1154	2011-12	23.2	47.8	29.1	14.0	12.9	73.0
Total	4442	2010-17	31.1	45.2	23.8	16.1	22.1	61.8

We conducted an analysis of variance to investigate whether there are differences between the samples in the means of the variables regarding the TC, attitudes towards the past, trust in institutions, belief in violence as a means of social change and positive socio-emotional climate. Overall means were assessed weighing cases by country. Due to the difficulty of checking the assumption of homogeneity of variances with large samples, we carried out a more robust Welch analysis of variance. We also conducted Games-Howell post hoc tests to compare means between samples.

Half of the sample affirmed to have some information about the TC work in their country. Knowledge was higher in Argentina and lower in Paraguay ($F(5, 1329.61) = 35.83, p = .0001$) (see Table 3). TCs were quite well evaluated across the countries, being better evaluated in Argentina than in the other samples ($F(5, 1287.55) = 75.66, p = .0001$). However, evaluation of their effectiveness was below the median point of the scale. Once again, this evaluation was higher in Argentina, while in Peru the TC was perceived as less effective ($F(5, 1292.51) = 158.57, p = .0001$). Regarding the emotions elicited by the TCs, participants across the samples did not report feeling very much emotion. Negative emotions were higher in Paraguay, Ecuador and Chile ($F(5, 1203.09) = 38.10, p = .0001$) while positive emotions were higher in Ecuador ($F(5, 1177.57) = 20.48, p = .0001$).

Social sharing about TCs and the violence were overall low (see Table 4). Social sharing about the TC was higher in Argentina and lower in Peru, Brazil and Paraguay ($F(5, 1329.61) = 35.83, p = .0001$). In turn, social sharing about the violence was higher in Chile and also

in Argentina and once again lower in Peru, Paraguay and Brazil ($F(5, 1366.42) = 49.96, p = .0001$).

Participants presented a positive attitude towards learning from the past. Attitude towards remembering was higher in Argentina, Peru, Brazil, and Paraguay ($F(5, 1363.34) = 16.30, p = .0001$) while attitude towards oblivion was higher in Peru than in the other samples ($F(5, 1372.60) = 45.62, p = .0001$).

Belief in violence as a means of social change, trust in institutions, and positive socio-emotional climate presented low means across the samples. Belief in violence ($F(4, 1562.43) = 18.30, p = .0001$) and trust in institutions ($F(4, 1346.76) = 122.05, p = .0001$) were higher in Paraguay and Peru than in the other samples. Finally, the positive socio-emotional climate was higher in Chile and Ecuador than in the other countries ($F(5, 1308.29) = 80.80, p = .0001$).

Table 3. *Truth Commissions' impact: knowledge, evaluations, emotions and functions' effectiveness perception*

Country	TC Knowledge (%)	TC Evaluation		Negative emotions		Positive emotions		TC Functions Effectiveness	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Argentina	89.3	3.49	.68	2.68	1.35	2.63	1.77	3.02	.67
Brazil	54.4	3.09	.79	2.89	1.45	2.35	1.58	2.53	.78
Chile	48.9	2.84	.73	3.02	1.34	2.32	1.46	2.32	.63
Ecuador	45.1	2.93	.67	3.06	1.32	2.90	1.54	2.32	.75
Paraguay	24.7	3.03	.63	3.09	1.42	2.33	1.67	2.52	.82
Peru	48.3	2.79	.65	2.47	.65	2.08	.94	1.96	.68
Total	48.7	2.99	.73	2.80	1.29	2.38	1.45	2.37	.80
Range	No/Yes	1-4		1-7		1-7		1-4	

Note: Cases were weighted by country to obtain the global means

Table 4. *Truth Commissions' impact: social sharing, need for sharing, inhibition, preference for remembering and preference for forgetting*

Country	Social sharing TC		Social sharing Violence		Memory		Oblivion		Belief in violent changes		Trust in institutions		Positive climate	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Argentina	1.89	.90	2.04	.95	3.51	.68	1.72	.93	1.64	.73	1.99	.53	0.03	1.06
Brazil	1.44	.72	1.76	.83	3.45	.79	1.71	.95	1.82	.84	1.90	.51	-0.14	0.93
Chile	1.68	.77	2.19	.93	3.29	.84	1.99	1.08	1.77	.88	1.92	.61	0.41	1.08
Ecuador	1.69	.81	1.88	.79	3.07	.83	1.95	1.04	n.d	n.d	n.d	n.d	0.25	1.03
Paraguay	1.48	.84	1.73	.93	3.36	.76	1.94	.99	1.97	.89	1.65	.45	-0.09	0.89
Peru	1.41	.63	1.67	.82	3.46	.78	2.42	1.17	1.93	.83	1.54	.46	-0.40	0.90
Total	1.54	.76	1.81	.87	3.38	.79	2.02	1.09	1.85	.84	1.74	.53	0.01	1.03
Range	1-4		1-4		1-4		1-4		1-4		1-4		-1.93 -3.98	

Note: Cases were weighted by country to obtain the global means.

Correlation analyses

Overall associations between the variables examined are presented in Table 5. Because the correlation profile of political position and victimization with others outcome is in general similar, we discuss mainly results related to political position.

Age, political position and Truth and Reconciliation Commissions' knowledge, emotions, evaluation, and social sharing

Age was associated with more knowledge about the TCs' work and social sharing about TC and collective violence but age was not significantly correlated to TC evaluation. Left-wing political positioning was associated with more knowledge about TC work, a better evaluation of it and its effectiveness, higher negative emotions elicited by the TC, and more social sharing about it and the violence. However, political positioning was not associated with reporting positive emotions about the TC.

Evaluation of the TC effectiveness, socio-emotional climate and personal trust in institutions

Correlations between TC's evaluation and positive socio-emotional climate, trust in institutions, and disbelief in violence as a means of social change were compared using the Comprehensive Meta-analysis software (CMA). It permits weighing correlations by sample size as well as assessing the heterogeneity of the effects between the samples and compares the mean effect sizes according to possible moderating variables. Pearson's r values that establish the relationships between measures were transformed to z Fisher values. Next, considering

sample sizes of each of the studies taken into account in the meta-analytical synthesis, a weighted mean value of the z values was calculated, establishing a z-mean.

Additionally, we calculated Rho values for the correlations in each sample. The Rho value estimates the effect size correcting by the reliability of the scales used. Then, we used the Rho value as a measure of the effect size to conduct the fixed and random models as well as the meta-regression analyses in the CMA – see Figure 1, 2 and 3 for detailed information for Rho values for the associations of TC effectiveness evaluation with each of the reconstruction of social cohesion variables (see also Table 7 for global estimations).

Table 5. Correlation matrix for the Truth Commission and psychosocial variables (N = 4442)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Sex	-													
2. Age	-.09* [-.12, -.06]	-												
3. Political Position	-.02 [-.05, .01]	-.05* [-.08, -.02]	-											
4. Victimization	-.08* [-.11, -.05]	.22* [.19, .25]	-.18* [-.21, -.15]	-										
5. Memory	.02 [-.01, .05]	.01 [-.02, .04]	-.01 [-.04, -.02]	-.03* [-.06, .00]	-									
6. Oblivion	.02* [-.01, .05]	.12* [.09, .15]	.13* [.10, .16]	-.02 [-.05, .01]	-.08* [-.11, -.05]	-								
7. TC knowledge	-.06* [-.09, -.03]	.09* [.06, .12]	-.11* [-.14, -.08]	.18* [.15, .21]	.11* [.08, .14]	-.15* [-.18, -.12]	-							
8. TC effectiveness	.03* [.00, .06]	.00 [-.03, .03]	-.07* [-.10, -.04]	.06* [.03, .09]	.19* [.16, .22]	-.16* [-.19, -.13]	.23* [.20, .26]	-						
9. Negative emotion	.09* [.06, .12]	.06* [.03, .09]	-.19* [-.22, -.16]	.14* [.11, .17]	.08* [.05, .11]	-.15* [-.18, -.12]	.13* [.10, .16]	.28* [.25, .31]	-					

(Continued)

Table 5 (continued)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
10. Positive emotion	-.06* [-.09, -.03]	.10* [.07, .13]	.00 [-.03, .03]	.09* [.06, .12]	.06* [.03, .09]	.02 [-.01, .05]	.05* [.02, .08]	.23* [-.12, -.06]	.21* [.18, .24]	-					
11. Soc. sharing TC	-.06* [-.09, -.03]	.14* [.11, .17]	-.16* [-.19, -.13]	.29* [.26, .32]	.07* [.04, .10]	-.14* [-.17, -.11]	.42* [.39, .45]	.28* [-.12, -.06]	.26* [.23, .29]	.14* [.11, .17]	-				
12. Soc. sharing viol.	-.08* [-.11, -.05]	.10* [.07, .13]	-.15* [-.18, -.12]	.27* [.24, .30]	.08* [.05, .11]	-.16* [-.19, -.13]	.34* [.31, .37]	.25* [.22, .28]	.27* [.24, .30]	.13* [.10, .16]	.66* [.63, .69]	-			
13. Belief in violence	-.11* [-.14, -.08.]	-.03* [-.06, .00]	.01 [-.02, .04]	.04* [.01, .07]	-.14* [-.17, -.11]	.12* [.09, .15]	-.03* [-.06, .00]	-.15* [-.18, -.12]	-.05* [-.08, -.02]	.02 [-.01, .05]	-.03 [-.06, .00]	-.02 [-.12, -.06]	-		
14. Trust institutions	.04* [.01, .07]	-.07* [-.04, -.01]	.02 [-.01, .05]	-.06* [-.09, -.03]	.12* [.08, .15]	-.10* [-.13, -.07]	.10* [.07, .13]	.30* [.27, .33]	.07* [.04, .10]	.17* [.14, .20]	.16* [.13, .19]	.16* [-.12, -.06]	-.11* [-.12, -.06]	-	
15. Positive Climate	-.04* [-.07, -.01]	-.02 [-.05, .01]	-.03* [-.06, .00]	.03* [.00, .06]	.08* [.05, .11]	.05* [.02, .08]	.05* [.02, .08]	.30* [.27, .33]	.15* [.12, .18]	.23* [.20, .26]	.16* [.13, .19]	.18* [-.12, -.06]	-.06* [-.12, -.06]	.48* [-.12, -.06]	

Note: Cases weighted by country. * $p < .001$ (1-tailed)

Effect sizes were weighted following the steps recommended for correlations (Borenstein, Hedges, Higgins, & Rothstein, 2009; Rosenthal & Rubin, 2003). We reported our results based on both a fixed and random-effects approach using CMA. A fixed-effects approach assumes that a general true effect exist because instruments and samples belong to the same universe. It uses participants as the unit of analysis and allows for generalization to other participants only in the studies sampled. On the other side, a random-effects approach assumes that there are different true effect sizes because studies belong to different universes (cultural region or nations). It uses studies as the unit of analysis and allows for generalization beyond the studies sampled. Because the fixed-effects approach uses a larger sample size (number of participants rather than number of studies), this approach is more powerful and yields more significant results than the random-effects approach. The latter is more realistic and fits more with cross-cultural diverse samples, and allows for generalization to studies yet to be sampled. It is typically the preferred approach in meta-analysis (Rosenthal & DiMatteo, 2001); therefore, our interpretation of results will be based on the random-effects approach.

We also apply the test statistic Q , which represents whether the variability in a sample of effect sizes is greater than what can be expected given within-study sampling error, and can, therefore, be used to calculate a p-value for whether the between-study heterogeneity is greater than zero. We focused on the random-effects estimate and tested the effects of the moderators – because Q was in our results usually was statistically significant (Borenstein et al., 2009).

Subgroups analysis and meta-regression models can be used to explore moderator hypotheses. Meta-regression is a type of weighted-regression that has been adapted to meta-analytic data, and is a special case of a multilevel model where the residual variance (i.e., Level-1) is assumed known; the residual variance is allowed to vary across studies and is set equal to v for each study. Like other regression methods, meta-regression can accommodate both continuous and categorical variables. Between studies heterogeneity is conceived as a function of study-level moderators, a so-called mixed-effects model because moderators are fixed effects. In this case, the interpretation would be that the true effect measured by a given study is determined by some study-level characteristics such as the methodology or the location where data were collected. Specifically, we used subgroup analysis to analyze if the samples diversity explains the variance in the association between TC evaluation and positive emotional climate, trust in institutions and disbelief in violence as mean of social change (Borenstein et al., 2009).

The variables used as moderators were: the time elapsed since the end of the dictatorship and TC establishment (1 = short-time (1-5 years) and 2 = long-time (more than 10 years), the political orientation of the government when TC was in session and the government when the survey was conducted (1 = left-wing and 2 = right-wing) and the long-term impact of the TC and level of violence (1 = low, 2 = medium and 3 = high). We also used as moderators the country evaluations obtained from Latinobarometer (Corporación Latinobarómetro, 2018) regarding the perception of democracy in each country, personal support of democracy, trust in the army, and trust in

the government in the year the survey was conducted (see Table 6 for a summary of the moderators used). The categorization was conducted by three blinded judges. The total agreement among the judges was 97%. The disagreements were discussed among the three judges, and a consensus was achieved. The moderators were analyzed using the meta-regression command of the CMA.

We used Egger's regression test to analyze the publication bias – which refers to the fact that studies with statistically significant effects are more likely to be published than studies with null effects, and published literature will be skewed toward positive effects, which will bias meta-analyses. The Egger's test is considered a statistical test of effect sizes asymmetry and examines the relationship between effect size and standard errors. Significant values for this test may indicate publication bias. Finally, we computed the Fail safe N – i.e. how many missing studies with zero effect size would need to retrieve and incorporate in the analysis before the p-value became non-significant. If it should emerge that we needed only a few studies (say, five or ten) to 'nullify' the effect, then we would be concerned that the true effect was indeed zero (Borenstein et al., 2009).

Table 6. *Moderating variables values used in the Comprehensive Meta-analysis meta-regression*

Country	Time TC	Government TC	Impact TC	Level of violence	Government survey	Democracy perception	Support democracy	Trust army	Trust government
Argentina	1	1	3	2	1	6.83	73	44	44
Brazil	2	1	1	1	2	5.19	54	53	19
Chile	1	1	2	2	1	6.28	63	61	32
Ecuador	2	1	1	1	1	6.14	71	66	44
Paraguay	2	1	1	1	1	5.83	50	58	32
Peru	1	2	2	3	1	6.08	59	42	34
Range	1-2	1-2	1-3	1-3	1-2	0-10	0-100	0-100	0-100

CMA procedure found that perceptions of TC effectiveness was associated to positive socio-emotional climate (fixed model: $\bar{r} = .31$, $Z = 20.05$, $p = .0001$; random model: $\bar{r} = .31$, $Z = 7.92$, $p = .0001$). Risk of publication bias was low (Egger's test: $t = 0.19$, $p = .431$). Fail-safe N indicated that an additional 589 studies with null effect are required to make the overall effect size non-significant. These effects were heterogeneous ($Q(5) = 30.19$, $p = .0001$, $I^2 = 83.44$). Trust in the government (model: $Q(1) = 12.97$, $p = .0001$; goodness of fit: $Q(4) = 11.60$, $I^2 = 65.53\%$, $p = .021$) and perception of democracy (model: $Q(1) = 5.65$, $p = .0001$; goodness of fit: $Q(4) = 19.65$, $I^2 = 79.64\%$, $p = .0001$) were significant moderators, explaining respectively 84% and 56% of the between-study variance (trust in the government: $c = .013$, $SE = .003$, 90% CI [0.01, 0.02], $Z = 3.83$; perception of democracy: $c = .172$, $SE = .072$, 90% CI [0.05, 0.29], $Z = 2.38$). This means that in the samples where there was more trust in the government and higher perception of democracy, the association between the perception of TC effectiveness and current positive climate was stronger.

Similar results were found for the association of perception of TC effectiveness and trust in institutions (fixed: $\rho = .30$, $Z = 18.41$, $p = .0001$; random: $\rho = .28$, $Z = 6.80$, $p = .0001$). Risk of publication bias was low (Egger's test: $t = 1.16$, $p = .166$). Fail-safe N indicated that an additional 382 studies with null effect are required to make the overall effect size non-significant. However, the effects were heterogeneous ($Q(4) = 23.80$, $p = .0001$, $I^2 = 83.20$). Trust in the government (model: $Q(1) = 15.69$, $p = .001$; goodness of fit: $Q(3) = 6.17$, $I^2 = 51.34\%$, $p = .104$) and perception of democracy (model: $Q(1) = 20.47$, $p = .0001$; goodness of fit: $Q(3) = 3.34$, $I^2 = 10.08\%$, $p = .343$) were significant

moderators explaining 95% and 100% of the between-study variance respectively (trust in the government: $c = .013$, $SE = .003$, 90% CI [0.01, 0.02], $Z = 3.96$; perception of democracy: $c = .189$, $SE = .042$, 90% CI [0.12, 0.26], $Z = 4.52$). This means that in the samples where there was more trust in the government, higher perception of democracy or higher support for it, the association between TC effectiveness perception and trust in institutions was stronger.

The results for disbelief in violence as a means of social change presented similar but weaker effects (fixed: $\rho = .13$, $Z = 7.78$, $p = .0001$; random: $\rho = .14$, $Z = 3.31$, $p = .001$). Peru represented an outlier presenting no significant effects. Risk of publication bias was low (Egger's test: $t = 1.15$, $p = .167$). Fail-safe N indicated that an additional 83 studies with null effect are required to make the overall effect size non-significant. However, the effects were heterogeneous ($Q(4) = 27.05$, $p = .0001$, $I^2 = 85.21$). The political orientation of the government which conducted the TC (model: $Q(1) = 23.32$, $p = .001$; goodness of fit: $Q(3) = 3.73$, $I^2 = 19.60\%$, $p = .292$) and the level of violence (model: $Q(1) = 13.81$, $p = .0001$; goodness of fit: $Q(3) = 7.51$, $I^2 = 60.07\%$, $p = .057$) were significant moderators explaining 100% and 92% of the between-study variance respectively (government TC: $c = -.183$, $SE = .038$, 90% CI [-0.25, -0.12], $Z = -4.83$; level of violence: $c = -.096$, $SE = .026$, 90% CI [-0.14, -0.05], $Z = -3.72$). This means that in the samples where the government which conducted the TC was left-wing and there were less violence, the association between perception of TC effectiveness and disbelief in violence as a means of social change was stronger.

Table 7. *Meta-analytic TC effectiveness perception results for the reconstruction of social cohesion*

Construct	<i>K</i>	<i>n</i>	\bar{r}	95% CI	80% CR	Q Statistic	ρ	95% CI	80% CR	Q Statistic
Positive climate	6	3930	.31	.25 to .37	.20 to .41	p = .0001	.39	.32 to .47	.25 to .53	p = .0001
Trust in Institutions	5	3633	.24	.19 to .29	.16 to .33	p = .007	.31	.24 to .37	.19 to .42	p = .0001
Disbelief in violence	5	3777	.11	.05 to .18	.00 to .23	p = .0001	.13	.06 to .19	.00 to .25	p = .0001

Study name

Statistics for each study

Correlation and 95% CI

	Correlation	Lower limit	Upper limit	Z-Value	p-Value
Argentina	0,472	0,394	0,544	10,405	0,000
Brazil	0,178	0,078	0,275	3,451	0,001
Chile	0,407	0,359	0,453	15,071	0,000
Ecuador	0,553	0,464	0,631	10,194	0,000
Paraguay	0,450	0,392	0,504	13,511	0,000
Peru	0,322	0,262	0,380	9,910	0,000
	0,401	0,316	0,481	8,481	0,000

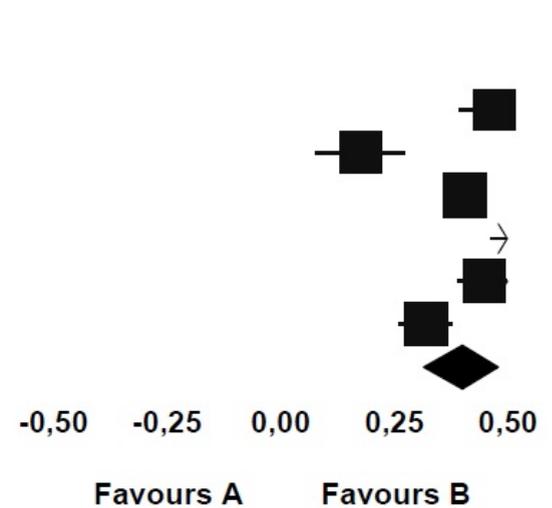


Figure 1. Rho values for the associations of Truth Commission effectiveness evaluation with positive socio-emotional climate across six samples.

<u>Study name</u>	<u>Statistics for each study</u>				
	Correlation	Lower limit	Upper limit	Z-Value	p-Value
Argentina	0,374	0,288	0,454	7,988	0,000
Brazil	0,065	-0,046	0,174	1,148	0,251
Chile	0,335	0,284	0,384	12,166	0,000
Paraguay	0,276	0,210	0,340	7,873	0,000
Peru	0,302	0,242	0,360	9,367	0,000
	0,279	0,201	0,354	6,798	0,000

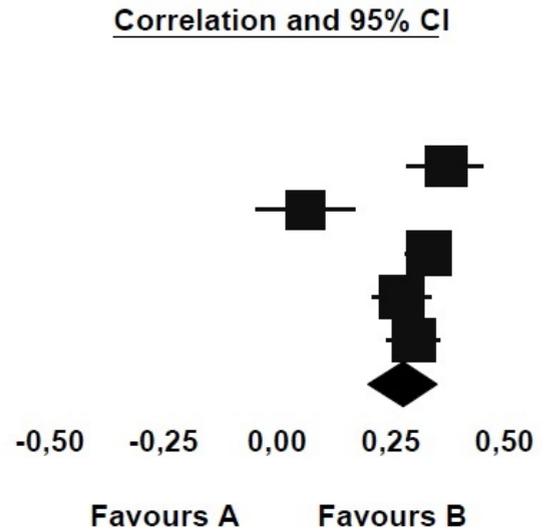


Figure 2. Rho values for the associations of Truth Commission effectiveness evaluation with trust in institutions across five samples.

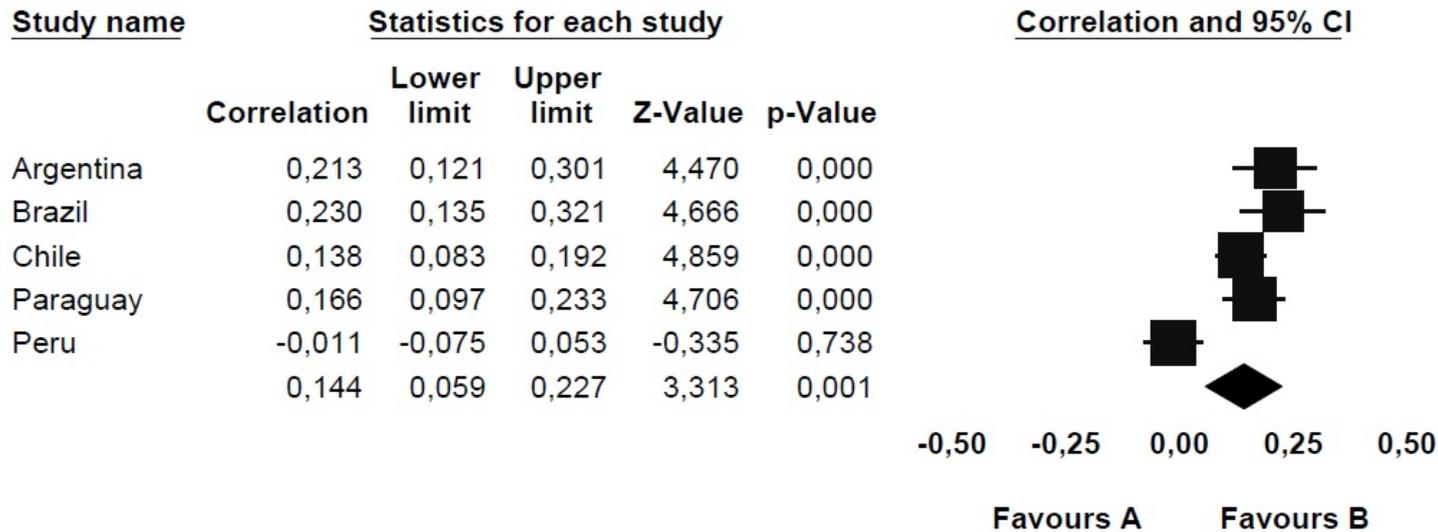


Figure 3. Rho values for the associations of Truth Commission effectiveness evaluation with disbelief in violence as a means of social change across five samples.

Linear multiple regressions: path analysis model

A linear multiple regression path analysis was carried out with the overall sample (weighing cases by country) to examine which variables were associated with the reconstruction of social cohesion (positive socio-emotional climate, trust in institutions and disbelief in violence as a means of social change). To test the hypothesis that the reconstruction of social cohesion is predicted by a positive evaluation of TC effectiveness, we included all psychosocial variables as covariates. We were particularly interested in verify whether the associations would remain controlling the effects of victimization and political position.

A model was tested through the Enter Method with the social cohesion as dependent variable. Predictors were: sex, age, political positioning, victimization, TC knowledge, functions effectiveness, social sharing about past and TC activities, negative and positive emotions on TC and preference for remembering or forgetting the past. Assumptions for multiple regression analysis were checked in all steps. This procedure excludes the assumption that perception of TC and emotional climate are only an expression of experience and political attitude.

First, we tested a model with TC effectiveness as the dependent variable. The model tested all psychosocial variables as predictors - excluding positive socio-emotional climate, trust in institutions, and belief in violence as a means of social change. This model presented an overall satisfactory fit ($F(10, 12600) = 289.15, p = .0001$) with an R^2 of .19. The main predictors of TC effectiveness perception were: TC

knowledge, positive emotions on TC, negative emotions on TC, preference for remembering the past, and social sharing about the violence. Sex (Standardized Beta: .04, $p = .0001$), age (Standardized Beta: -.04, $p = .0001$) and rejection of oblivion (Standardized Beta: -.06, $p = .0001$) showed smaller but significant effects. Political positioning (Standardized Beta: .00, $p = .938$) and victimization (Standardized Beta: .01, $p = .200$) did not present significant effects.

Second, a general index of reconstruction of social cohesion was created using Varimax Principal Components factor analysis. A unique factor explain 49.62 % of the variance (factor loading on trust in institution = .84, positive emotional climate = .82 and belief in violence as a means of social change = -.34).

Third, a multiple regression was run to contrast the specific association of TC effectiveness with reconciliation. The model that included the index of reconstruction of social cohesion as the explained variable and all the predictors presented a good overall fit ($F(11, 9117) = 178.08, p = .0001$) with an R^2 of .18 (see Figure 4). Sex (Standardized Beta: .02, $p = .084$), political positioning (Standardized Beta: .03, $p = .005$), knowledge (Standardized Beta: -.01, $p = .365$) and negative emotions on the TC (Standardized Beta: -.03, $p = .012$) did not show significant effects on the social cohesion. Yet, age (Standardized Beta: -.06, $p = .0001$), victimization (Standardized Beta: .05, $p = .0001$), preference for remembering (Standardized Beta: .06, $p = .0001$) but also preference for forgetting (Standardized Beta: .06, $p = .0001$) showed small but significant effects. However, the main predictors of reconciliation were TC effectiveness, social sharing, positive emotions. The path analysis model shows that these three

variables predicted directly positive socio-emotional climate, trust in institutions, and disbelief in violence as a means of social change. Social sharing and positive emotions also indirectly predicted the reconstruction of social cohesion through TC effectiveness perception.

Finally, we run a multiple regression including all the previous predictor variables together with trust in institutions and belief in violence as a means of social change as predictors of socio-emotional climate. This model presented a good overall fit ($F(14, 8834) = 313.93$, $p = .0001$) with an R^2 of .33. The main predictors of positive socio-emotional climate were trust in institutions (Standardized Beta: .44, $p = .0001$), TC effectiveness (Standardized Beta: .21, $p = .0001$) and oblivion (Standardized Beta: .15, $p = .0001$). This analysis showed that a positive perception of TC's effectiveness predicted a positive socio-emotional climate controlling the effects of institutional trust, showing that the effects of TCs on the socio-emotional climate are not only a reflection of general trust in the social system.

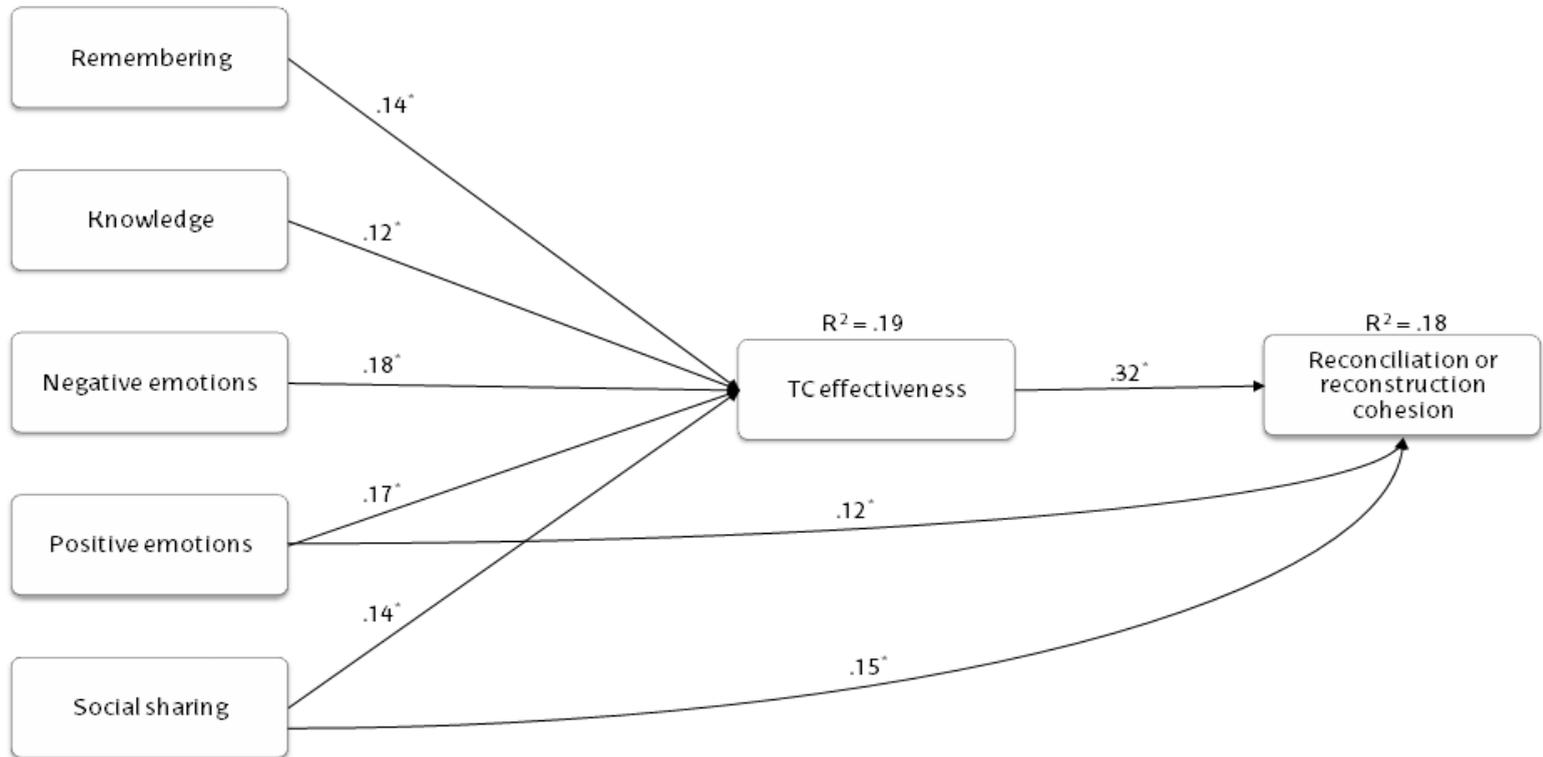


Figure 4. Results for the path analysis for psychosocial variables related to the TC, effectiveness perception and the reconstruction of social cohesion.

Note: Cases were weighted by country. Only Standardized coefficients greater than .10 are presented. * significant at $p = .0001$.

Discussion

Main results: positive TC evaluation, limited knowledge and association with social impact

Descriptive results showed that, in spite of the positive evaluation of TC's activities, and in spite of the fact that most of the participants have favorable opinions about learning from the past and reject forgetting as a form of dealing with past collective violence, an important percentage of the sample was unaware of TCs existence (with the exception of Argentina). The knowledge about the TC's work was higher among victims and in countries where reparation and restoration measures were more apparent.

Argentina was the country where the participants knew the most about the implemented measures of the TC, and where they were evaluated as the most effective. Probably, these results are due to the fact that Argentina is the country where the most trials have been held, more reparations have been extended, and more memory work has been done by institutions in terms of public human rights policies (Hayner, 2011) ¶.

On the contrary, Peru is the country where the work carried out by the TC was perceived as the most ineffective. These results are likely associated with an ambivalent reception by public opinion that the TC had during its mandate and subsequent delivery of the report, as well as unsatisfied expectations of symbolic reparation, the absence of actions that improved material reparations and the limitations of judicial action (Espinosa et al., 2017).

General limited level of emotional reaction and social sharing – higher levels in left-wing and victims

The surveys showed that the emotional impact (emotions of anger, shame, sadness, etc.), linked to the past and the TCs' activities were quite low, although the victims reported a higher level of emotional impact. The findings also showed that there was a general agreement on the need to remember the past, where left-wing and victims showed a more positive attitude, reporting the necessity of sharing the events and having a more positive evaluation of measures of transitional justice. In the six samples, left-wing participants and victims expressed the greatest need to share socially about the facts about the violence, while reporting greater emotional activation, congruent with previous studies that show that victims mobilize a greater coping effort (Rimé, 2009).

We found positive associations of age and political positioning with most of the variables regarding the TC, such as knowledge about it, perception of effectiveness, social sharing, and emotions elicited. Other studies have found these associations (Aguilar et al., 2011; Arnosó, Cárdenas, et al., 2012; Arnosó & Da Costa, 2015; Arnosó, Muratori, et al., 2014; Arnosó, Páez, et al., 2015; Cárdenas et al., 2016). Left-wing positioning was associated with higher levels of TC knowledge, evaluation, and effectiveness as well as to social sharing about it and the past. However, these associations were moderated by contextual variables. Positive associations of left-wing political positioning to the perception of TC effectiveness was moderated by the political orientation of the government which established the TC, the

level of violence and the time between the end of the violence and the establishment of the TC, meaning that a higher level of violence and recentness of the TC enhances this association. The association between political position and positive TC evaluation was higher in the Peruvian case – the only nation with a right-wing government when the TC was implemented. Thus, the results found seem to restrict the importance of political positioning in evaluating TCs outcomes and to stress current social support as an important variable worth noting. Results are congruent with a previous study (Bobowik et al., 2017) supporting the idea that when the government is more favorable and politically close to the victims, a more positive view of TC appears among victims and left-wing people.

TC evaluation associated to institutional trust and positive emotional climate: the role of emotions and social sharing

The meta-analysis found a significant and generalizable mean effect of the positive evaluation of TC on positive socio-emotional climate and trust in institutions in the six nations (but not with regard to the Army and Police, showing that TC it is not a panacea. In general, the results confirm that a positive evaluation of TC effectiveness is associated with these two aspects of the reconstruction of social cohesion. These results are consistent with findings of previous studies about the positive societal outcomes of TCs (Cilliers et al., 2016). That is an interesting result because TC activities were found to increase the negative social climate in some contexts, especially among the victims through the re-living of negative emotions (Beristain, Páez, Rimé, & Kanyangara, 2010; Cárdenas,

Páez, Rimé, Bilbao, & Asún, 2014; Kanyangara, Rimé, Philippot, & Yzerbyt, 2007; Rimé, Kanyangara, Yzerbyt, & Páez, 2011). Indeed, reporting feeling both, positive and negative emotions were associated to a more positive TC functions effectiveness, confirming the notion that transitional justice provokes ambivalent reactions: positive, related to reparatory activities, and negative, because TC focuses on negative collective events. Therefore, results seem to point out the positive long-term outcomes of TCs through the strengthening of institutions and despite a possible initial decreasing on the social climate and the affective cost for the victims.

The role of TC effectiveness and contextual trust in institutions and democracy

To achieve positive outcomes, TCs have to be considered as effective. That perception seems to be related to political attitudes and contextual factors. With respect to contextual factors, the association between TC evaluation with positive socio-emotional climate and trust in institutions was stronger where there was more trust in the government or higher perception of democracy; and also higher support of democracy in the case of institutional trust. Others studies have found that contextual institutional efficacy reinforces positive TC effects (Sikkink & Booth Walling, 2007), showing how much TCs evaluations are impacted by the political environment in which they operate.

Although age and political positioning were associated with most of the variables related to the TC impact and evaluation, other variables seem to better predict a positive evaluation of the TCs'

outcomes. Therefore, it seems that the individual's reactions to TC are the most important factors to consider in terms of the TCs effectiveness and in enhancing a more positive socio-emotional climate. It is important to recall that the positive socio-emotional climate was predicted by the perception of TCs as effective, controlling for other variables and trust in institutions, excluding that a positive perception of socio-emotional climate is only a reflection of general trust in the social system.

Higher social sharing, positive emotions, acceptance of past and exposure to violence associated to reconstruction of social cohesion: a process of collective post-traumatic growth

The psychosocial variables found as predictors of positive socio-emotional climate, institutional trust and rejection of violence as a means of social change, included (as expected) a positive TC evaluation, but also higher social sharing about the past, positive emotions related to TC activities and the past, and to a lower extent, positive attitude towards remembering the past, forgetting, higher exposure to collective violence and being younger. Thus, results seem to corroborate the importance of social communication that emphasizes positive emotions and the acceptance of the past in investigating the transitional justice effects on the socio-emotional climate (Bar-Tal, Halperin, & De Rivera, 2007). The fact that acceptance of the past and being a victim or having had high exposure to collective violence was related to reconciliation together with high social sharing and positive emotions, suggests that a process of collective post-traumatic growth is possible for people affected by

collective violence (Reyes, Grondona-Opazo, Rodríguez, & Páez, 2018).

Forgetting the past and the Peruvian case: the role of massive violence

A positive attitude towards remembering the past, as might be expected, but also an attitude in favor of forgetting, were found as predictors for positive socio-emotional climate and trust in institutions. In societies that have passed through very violent and polarized conflict, people might prefer silence as opposed to arousing old antagonisms (Bar-Tal, 2017). It is important to note that attitudes towards remembering and learning from the past were predominant, as was the refusal to forget the past.

However, one of the multivariate analyses shows the relevance of forgetting. Multiple regression including trust in institution and belief in violence as a means of social change as predictors, confirmed the specific association of a positive evaluation of the TCs with a positive socio-emotional climate. However, a positive attitude towards forgetting the past was also found as a significant predictor of a positive socio-emotional climate. In this sense, in the country where the violence was most widespread, Peru, there was an important group that preferred to forget and this preference characterized regions and people most affected by collective violence - contrary to what happened in other countries, where those affected insisted more on remembering and not forgetting. This suggests that massive violence, in which perpetrators and victims coexist, and the conditions of such coexistence continue to mark their lives, orient the population towards forgetting as something more functional within that context. It has also

been suggested that Andean culture emphasizes "burying the past" as a way of dealing with trauma and conflict (Espinosa et al., 2017). Therefore, transitional justice seems to have the difficult dual tasks of keeping the memory alive to learn and strength the institutions while forgetting to heal and overcome the former political antagonisms.

Truth Commissions as restorative rituals

Overall, the results support the idea that the transitional justice activities can be conceived as restorative rituals. A positive view of TCs' activities were associated with a relatively more positive view of society and the rejection of violence as a means of social change, suggesting that they fulfill their role as a ritual of transitional justice reinforcing the social cohesion (Beristain et al., 2010; Páez, 2010). In others words, a favorable opinion towards the commissions was generally associated with rejection of violence as means of social changes, a better perception of the socio-emotional climate and more confidence in the institutions; or rather a less negative representation the socio-emotional climate, because in all countries surveyed, a negative view of collective emotions prevails, and the evaluation of the institutions borders on rejection. Despite these limitations, TCs act as rituals that improve the socio-emotional climate and intergroup relations and help to generate higher levels of institutional legitimacy (Cardenas et al., 2015). Institutional trust and improvement of intergroup relations are constitutive of political reconciliation alongside with a higher support of human rights (Gibson, 2007). This is in partially associated with the rejection of social violence as means of social change, but was not explicitly explored in this study.

Conclusions

In general, the results supported the idea that evaluation of TCs as effective is related to more trust in institutions and a positive socio-emotional climate. In turn, perceptions of TC effectiveness are more related to sharing information about it, the emotions elicited by its activities, the attitudes towards learning from the past, and the social sharing about the past. Age and political positioning were found to have limited importance in evaluating TCs effectiveness, but trust in institutions and political climate were associated with most of the TC variables. In this scenario, the results show that in order to build societies where impunity does not prevail and human rights are respected, it is preferable that the commissions exist and that their work is widely disseminated and accessible to the country's citizens.



General Discussion

In the 1980s, the idea dominant in the military regime in Brazil was for a slow, gradual and, secured opening towards democracy. Therefore, an indirect presidential election through Congress was planned for 1985.

At the end of the regime in 1984, people were protesting demanding direct presidential elections.

In the poster, “Amanhã vai ser outro dia” (Tomorrow will be another Day) refers to the song “Apesar de você” (Despite you) written by Chico Buarque de Hollanda in 1970. Critics against the regime disguised in metaphors, this song escaped the censorship being a hit and also a hymn against the oppression.

The interplay between culture, education, history, communication, memory, politics, and representations of the past is a complex but exciting field of study which was only scratched in this thesis.

This thesis presented four studies aiming to investigate the Brazilian Truth Commission impact, emotional reactions, social sharing, evaluations, and perceived effectiveness. We also aimed to compare these results with those from similar samples in other South American countries. Finally, we investigated the social representations of the dictatorial past in Brazil and their relations to psychosocial variables.

Truth Commissions (TCs) are temporary transitional justice instances carried out to help the evolution from a violent political regime to a democratic and peaceful one (Hayner, 2011). They could be considered effective if they achieve to: find the truth about the violent period; create an integrative history about the past and; prevent new conflicts from arising (Gibson, 2004). Brazilian Truth commission was established in 2012 and released its final report in December 2014. Some features are important to bear in mind when interpreting the results about the Brazilian TC and the social representations of the dictatorship:

1. Different than other countries such as Argentina and Chile, the Truth Commission in Brazil was carried out a long time (27 years) after the end of the dictatorship. Therefore, it was not part of the same movement that put an end to the authoritarian government and could not benefit from a positive social context to improve its impact and outcomes.

2. The level of violence in Brazilian dictatorship was relatively low comparing to other countries which carried out Truth Commissions. There were 434 murders or disappearances in 21 years of regime. To compare, in Argentina there were more than 8000

executions or disappearances committed by the state agents, and in Peru there were about 69000 murders or disappearances committed by both state agents and left-wing organizations.

3. Brazil was in a tremendous political, social, and economic crisis starting in the time of the TC final report release and remaining the years after it, when the data for our studies were collected. The peak of protests was in 2015, right after the final report release which could have impacted its diffusion.

4. Both, the ex-president Dilma Rousseff who established the Truth Commission and the current president Jair Bolsonaro have strong personal relations to the authoritarian period. They were in opposite roles. While Bolsonaro was a soldier during this period, Rousseff was a leftist militant. She is accused by Bolsonaro and their supporters of being a terrorist. According to them, she participated in armed actions such as bank robbers and kidnaps. Moreover, she is said to be trying to establish a communist regime in the country. Therefore, she was accused in the time of the Truth Commission establishment of looking for revenge (Pinto, 2010), accusations that she denied (Veja, 2012).

Next, we present a summary of the main results found in the four studies and their relation with previous studies on TCs impact and evaluations, support for authoritarianism and social representations of history.

Study 1

The first study aimed to investigate the spontaneous reactions about the Truth Commission report release on news comments in the

three most read newspapers in Brazil (“Folha de São Paulo”, “O Globo” and “O Estado de São Paulo”).

We were quite surprised to observe the extreme criticism with which the report was received by those who commented on the news. Previous surveys on TC impact in South America had shown that TCs were generally well evaluated (Arnosso et al., 2015). We could expect at least two groups, one in favor and other opposing TC work to be observed.

Some explanations were drawn to explain these results:

1. People commenting on news represent a different population than the general one (Mitchelstein, 2011; Nagar, 2011). Indeed, until 2014 only 55% of households had been permanently connected to the internet, with a great difference in connection rate between the richer households (90%) and the poorer (29%) (IBGE, 2015). Labor Party (which was in the government when the TC was established) is voted less among the wealthier people (G1, 2014). Accordingly, a poll on Folha de São Paulo’s website showed that only 22% of the readers voted for Dilma Rousseff in 2014 elections (comparing with 38% of all voters who had voted for her) (Folha de São Paulo, 2015). However, even if the comments investigated do not represent the overall population opinion they may represent the opinions of those who have more participation in political activities offline (Boulianne, 2015; Liu & Fahmy, 2011).

2. People who are motivated to comment are those who disagree with the news, often moved by strong emotions (Albrecht, 2006).

3. The first comments might have influenced those who agree with them to express their opinion (Lee, 2012; Lee & Jang, 2010) even increasing the radicalization of the discourse (Anderson et al., 2014; Santana, 2014) and those who disagree to silence (Liu & Fahmy, 2011; Noelle-Neumann, 1974). Indeed, the three classes found referred to the previous comments on each of the three newspapers analyzed indicating some kind of resonance of the first comments.

4. There might have been a change in the social representations about the military regime that was found as overall critical in the 2000s (Sá et al., 2009). Therefore, nowadays, the representation would be more positive, and the TC would be evaluated very badly. In this sense, the social representations of history are especially sensitive to present social demands (Bobowik et al., 2014; Liu et al., 2014). The social and political climate in Brazil in 2014 was very negative. Rousseff was just elected in a very polarized campaign during which a corruption scandal came out, and the country started to perceive the first signs of an economic crisis which would last for years. Thus, the negative evaluations about President Rousseff, her Party, and leftists, in general, seemed to have anchored the negative social representations about TC work and its report. Some comments even justified the torture Rousseff was victim during the dictatorship. These comments argued that she deserved these tortures for being corrupt or a bandit. Thus, for some readers, if Rousseff and their supporters represent the evil side, those who victimized her might represent the good side.

The results found in study 1 led to the conclusion that the positive view about the military regime, that was minority in 2005 (Sá et al., 2009) would have been increasing in acceptance. Another reason

that led to this conclusion was the increasing popularity of Jair Bolsonaro, an advocator of the military regime, who even dedicated his vote in favor of Rousseff's impeachment to her torturer. Political positioning partially anchored social representation about the military regime in 2005 (Sá et al., 2009), however, in 2014 it seemed that the current political situation was affecting the overall representation of the military regime. In this sense, it is also important to bear in mind that a third of Brazilian does not totally support democracy, and 20% support the use of torture by state agents (Datafolha, 2014).

Another aspect that could help to explain a possible change in the social representations about the military regime would be the generational change going on 50 years after the coup that implemented it. Therefore, those who lived this event as adults are giving place to the new generation who are learning about the past from elders' narrative or from the history books. The generational change is the time when the different memories should converge to a consensual social representation about the past (J. Assmann, 2008; Halbwachs, 1950/2004). History usually provides a coherent and legitimated narrative that is taught in schools to the next generations. The contents which should be taught are the object of tensions and discussions (Namer, 1987). The results found in study 1 could have led to the conclusion that the TC, which has as one of its objectives to create an integrative narrative that includes all sides of the conflict (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b; Hayner, 2011) might have failed on this objective.

We could have concluded that the long-time passed between the end of the military regime and the TC implementation might have

influenced in the way people evaluate the TC compared with other countries such as Argentina and Chile. In these countries, the TC was part of the same movement that put an end on the dictatorship (Hayner, 2011), and thus, they were implemented in a context of social support. The opposite seemed to have occurred in Brazil where TC published its report in a context of high rejection of both, President Rousseff and leftism in general and more radicalization on the political positions. In this context, putting the authoritarian past in agenda might have had a counter-productive effect. The comments on news did not recognize the truth about the past the TC tried to construct, doubting about the results found by its investigation and questioning even the consensual aspects about the regime found in previous researches (Sá et al., 2009). However, the two other studies carried out to investigate these aspects and presented on this thesis provided a more comprehensive picture about the psychosocial processes related to both, the evaluations about the TC and the social representations about the past.

Study 2

The second study aimed to analyze the TC impact, emotional reactions, evaluations and perceived effectiveness across three samples: the first with undergraduate students in 2014 (during TC work and just before TC report release), the second with adults in 2015 (right after the report release) and the third also with adults in 2017 (more than two years after the report release). Due to limitations in time and resources, we could not conduct a longitudinal design.

Contrary to the expectations generated by study 1 results with internet comments, study 2 showed that TC evaluations were positive

across the three samples. TC impact and evaluations showed some relation with political positioning as found in previous studies (Arnosó & Da Costa, 2015; Arnoso et al., 2015; Cárdenas et al., 2013, 2014, 2016; Reyes et al., 2015). Those relations were not so clear in the third sample in 2017, maybe indicating a long-term impact of TC activities less anchored in political positioning.

The association of political positioning with TC variables was found especially in the second sample (2015). Due to the transversal design, it is difficult to be sure about the reasons that could have led to these associations. Maybe in polarized contexts, people anchor their opinions about political issues more in line with their political positioning than in more quiet times. Anyway, it seems that in a lower or higher extent, political positioning is related to the TC impact and evaluation. TCs are created to integrate a once divided society (Gibson, 2004; Hayner, 2011). Although we found that TC positive evaluation was associated to left-wing political positioning in the three studies, we also found overall high means for this variable across the three studies, which lead us to conclude that TC was overall evaluated positively.

TC variables showed inconclusive associations with age. A previous study in Chile has shown age to be associated with more TC impact and positive evaluation (Arnosó, Cárdenas, et al., 2012). However, studies have also shown associations of being young to a positive attitude towards remembering (Aguilar et al., 2011; Arnoso, Cárdenas, et al., 2012; Bombelli, Mele, et al., 2018). No association was found in Brazil in this regard too. In that sense, it is worth to note that the dictatorship seems to have less importance to people who lived

it in Brazil comparing to people in other South American countries (Páez et al., 2018). Moreover, the Amnesty Law approved in 1979 encouraged a forgetting process and forbidden any kind of trial (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014a). That not occurred in Argentina and Chile, where trials were conducted. Moreover, the violence in these countries was massive and much more extended than in Brazil (Hayner, 2011). Still, considering the low level of urbanization and literacy Brazil had at that time (IBGE, 2019a, 2019b), together, these contextual factors may explain the low associations of age with TC variables.

In the fourth study of this thesis, we were able to provide some evidence that age indeed shows little associations to TC variables through six South American countries except for TC knowledge and social sharing. Therefore, we believe that TC variables would be associated more to the political and social attitudes and beliefs as well as to educational level and the current social climate than to the generation belonging. Due to the first sample was comprised only by undergraduate students and in second sample educational level was not asked we could not run analysis about the relation of education to TC variables in the scope of the second study. However, in the third study we could found clear relations of lack of education to positive attitudes and emotions regarding the dictatorship.

The perception of TC effectiveness predicted social cohesion, even controlling the effects of political positioning and age. The fourth study of this thesis, as well as previous researches, have found that TC effectiveness perceptions associate with trust in institutions and perception of positive socio-emotional climate (Cárdenas et al., 2014;

Espinosa et al., 2017). Our study furthers the knowledge finding that these variables, together with the disbelief in violence as a means of social change are associated with each other, being used as an index of social cohesion. Considering disbelief in violence was a single question, future studies may integrate more this anti-violence dimension through a scale. Moreover, controlling the effects of age and political positioning allows evaluate better the contribution of the TCs to the reconstruction of the social cohesion.

We also found that attitude towards remembering the past and the emotions elicited by the TC, no matter if negative or positive, could predict the perception of the TC as effective. These associations had already been found in other studies (Arnosó et al., 2015; Cárdenas et al., 2014; Cárdenas, Páez and Rimé, 2013). However, these variables are also usually associated with political positioning. Our study found evidence that a positive attitude towards remembering and the emotional impact of the TC could predict a better evaluation of TC effectiveness independently of the political positioning.

However, we found different effects between these variables across the three studies. These different results could be due to a replication problem (i.e., the results found in one study could not be confirmed by the other) but also it could indicate some differences in the relationship between the attitudes towards remembering the past and the emotions elicited by the TCs in different social contexts. For instance, in our study, the emotions showed higher effects on the perception of TC effectiveness in 2015 (right after the TC report release and during the political crisis) than in 2017 when the attitudes towards remembering showed a positive effect on the evaluations of

the TC outcomes. Therefore, our study suggests that regarding the TCs evaluation, the social climate of support and the timing in which the TC work is carried out could be important variables to take into consideration on analyzing them. Indeed, we found evidence that supports this idea in the fourth study in which we showed through a meta-analysis with six South American countries that social contexts could moderate the effects of the associations between psychosocial and TC variables.

Respect our data, it is important to note that they were collected just before the ascension of Jair Bolsonaro as an important political figure in Brazilian politics. The current president Bolsonaro is very critical against the work of the TC and an advocator of the military regime (G1, 2019b, 2019a)◦. Therefore, his opinions may have impacted the knowledge about the TC work after the data collection but in a negative way, decreasing its evaluations and effectiveness perceptions. The increasing of hostility among political groups and the absence of a consensual narrative about the past may impact not only TC evaluations but the democratic order (Allen, 1999; Noor et al., 2008). Therefore, analyzing the social representations of history is paramount to investigate the long-term impact of the TC in established this shared narrative about the authoritarian past.

Study 3

In the third study, we aimed to analyze the psychosocial variables related to the social representations about the military regime in Brazil. Due to the results found in study 1, we expected to found

more positive representations than those found in a previous study 2000s (Sá et al., 2009).

Results from the prototypical analysis presented an overall similarity with those found by Sá et al. (2009) not fully confirming our expectations. The overall social representation of the military regime seems to be still critical. However, a revisionist perspective representing it as a positive period of order, discipline, respect, and even liberty might be increasing. The term “order” present in Brazilian national flag was part of the central core indicating that a nationalistic representation about the past may be rising in Brazil. It is worth noting that Brazil was in political crisis during the data collection. This condition may have affected data, but also, it is interesting to observe that the times of crisis are generally when social representations are transformed being a great opportunity to study this process (Moscovici, 1961/2012).

Finally, as we found a great percentage of people who did not answer the association task (about 20%), we carried out correlation analysis to investigate whether there was any association to not mention words to the variables regarding the military regime and the TC evaluation. We found interesting results on this regard. Low education, authoritarianism, Truth Commission negative evaluation, as well as positive emotions and opinions about the regime were associated with silence on the association task, not mentioning words regarding the military regime. These results may point out an existence of a mute zone on the social representation of the military regime in Brazil, that means, a representation that is not expressed because it is counter-normative though they do exist and influence peoples

behaviors (Abric, 2003; Flament, 1999; Guimelli & Deschamps, 2000; Menin, 2006). Therefore, the results finding that the social representations of the military regime are critical should be restricted to consider that an important part of the sample simply did not express their representation.

When interpreting the results of researches like our own, we have to be aware of the limitations, especially if the object of research is polemical or sensible. For instance, people who agreed to answer the questionnaire might be those who are more interested and informed about the topic. Another source of bias can be that people are ashamed to express counter-normative or extreme positions. Thus, it is very important using different methods of research in order to understand people attitudes, emotions, beliefs, and representations from different angles. The studies on the mute zone are usually about prejudice. Finding its existence on a study on social representations of history may open new paths for research on this field. Therefore, future studies should be especially aware of these limitations.

Our study found support for the idea that older age, conservative political opinions, and lower education are associated with positive emotions about the military regime. These same variables were found as associated with positive representations (Sá et al., 2009) indicating that representations and emotions about the past could be aligned. Indeed, our results showed high associations of positive emotions and words about the regime. Previous studies have shown that political positioning is associated with different representations of the military regimes in Latin America (Arnosó, Arnosó, et al., 2012; Arnosó, Páez, et al., 2015; Herranz & Basabe, 1999; Manzi, 2006;

Muller et al., 2016; Sosa et al., 2016). Our study furthers the knowledge indicating the role of other variables such as support of authoritarianism and trust in the government for a positive representation of the previous authoritarian regime.

Specifically, we found that belief in violence as mean of social change and trust in the government could also be a predictor of positive emotions on the military regime. However, we expected to find an association of distrust in the government in this regard. A first explanation for the association of trust in the government to positive emotions could be that it is an effect of government shift after leftist president Rousseff impeachment. Therefore, those who trusted more in the new government (which was more conservative than the former) would be those who feel positive emotions regarding the military period. However, we did not find associations between political opinions and trust in the government. Moreover, we observed that trust in the government was associated with both positive and negative emotions on the military regime. These results suggest the existence of a disillusioned or disengaged part of the sample, which does not trust in the government but also does not express any emotions about the country's past, either positive or negative.

Accordingly with our hypothesis and the results found for positive emotions, we found that liberal political opinions and education were predictors of negative emotions on the military regime. We did not find associations of age and negative emotions. Moreover, when including other variables on the model, only disbelief in violence as a means of social change, trust in the government and information about the regime by family or friends were found as significant

predictors of negative emotions about the military regime. These results could be related to the negative social representations about the regime being more consensual than the positive. Therefore, the positive emotions might be restricted to some groups (elders, conservative with low education) while the negative emotions are more widespread and related broadly to political beliefs and knowledge. Indeed, previous studies found a relationship between political engagement and critical social representations about authoritarian regimes (Naiff et al., 2008; Sá et al., 2009).

Finally, results also found support for the idea that holds positive social representations about an authoritarian regime could represent a threat to democracy. Specifically, we found that mentioning positive words about the military regime, alongside with conservatism and belief in violence as a means of social change were significant predictors of agreeing with a hypothetical military rule restoration. On this regard, it is important to note that agreeing with the military regime restoration was a minority position (12.5%). This proportion was similar to the found in polls about the preference for authoritarian regimes in South America (Corporación Latinobarómetro, 2016). Moreover, the support of authoritarianism increases in contexts of crises (Georgiadou et al., 2018). Therefore, our results suggest that, although most of those who support right-wing authoritarian positions hold conservative opinions, many conservative people do not agree with these positions and other variables such as the social contexts of crises and stabilities could play a role in support of democracy.

Study 4

Finally, in the fourth study, we aimed to integrate the results of Brazilian samples in study 2 with the findings in other South American countries (Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Peru). This meta-analytical study globally showed an overall association of age and political positioning with TC impact and effectiveness perception. This results corroborated previous studies about the associations of these variables with TC impact and effectiveness perception (Aguilar et al., 2011; Arnosó et al., 2012; Arnosó et al., 2014; Arnosó et al., 2015; Cárdenas et al., 2013, 2016; Reyes et al., 2015; Zubieta et al., 2015).

Nonetheless, further analysis showed that a positive evaluation of TC effectiveness is associated with the reconstruction of social cohesion even controlling for political positioning, age, and sex. These associations were stronger in other countries than in Brazil, indicating that TC effects may be enhanced in more favorable social contexts. These results are in line with previous studies about the positive societal outcomes of TCs (Cilliers et al., 2016; Páez, 2010; Rimé et al., 2010), especially in contexts of social support (Bobowik et al., 2017).

Another interesting result was that reporting feeling both positive and negative emotions was positively associated with a more positive TC effectiveness perception. Therefore, the ambivalent effects of the TCs were confirmed as have been found by previous studies (Beristain, Páez, Rimé, & Kanyangara, 2010; Bobowik, Bilbao, & Momoitio, 2010; Cárdenas, Páez, Rimé, Bilbao, & Asún, 2014; Kanyangara, Rimé, Philippot, & Yzerbyt, 2007; Rimé, Kanyangara, Yzerbyt, & Páez, 2011). We found confusing results on this comparing

the three samples in Brazil. This result might be pointing out the importance of social contexts in the emotional eliciting of emotions about the TCs.

Although age and political positioning were associated with most of the TC variables, other variables seem to predict better a positive evaluation of the TC outcomes. Although we did not find any effect of the societal impact of the TCs in each country as a moderator of the associations of perception of effectiveness with positive socio-emotional climate and trust in institutions, the knowledge about the TCs and the emotions elicited by them predicted the perception of TC effectiveness. Therefore, rather than the societal impact of the TCs, it seems that the individual relation with it as well as the trust in institutions are the most important factors to consider the TCs as effective and to enhance the current social climate.

More importantly, TC positive view was consistently associated with positive socio-emotional climate and trust in institutions. These associations were stronger in the nations where there is more trust in the government or perception of democracy. Therefore, the results seem to point out the positive long-term outcomes of TCs through the strengthening of institutions despite the initial negative impact on the social climate and the affective cost for the victims.

To achieve these outcomes, TCs have to be considered as effective. That perception seems to be related to contextual factors that suggest a strong institutional framework, like the positive perception of democracy in the country, support of democracy and trust in the government. Thus, results seem to corroborate the importance of

considering the social contexts on investigating the transitional justice effects on the social climate (Bar-Tal et al., 2007; Blatz & Philpot, 2010).



Conclusions

This picture was taken in 2015 by Paulo Peixoto/Folhapress. It shows people protesting against Dilma Rousseff government demanding a military “intervention”.

In the poster: Impeachment: Sacks Dilma; Military Intervention: all the thieves.

A context of crisis may damage the trust in the democracy institutions to deal with the problems and crimes leading to radicalized positions.

Historical narratives are often used to legitimize these positions. In this sense, the historical knowledge could prevent repeating past mistakes.

The Truth Commissions may fulfill a function of letting more people know about past violations and validate victims’ memories with material proofs.

However, the current social context and individual features may influence the social representations of history and the attitudes towards the present issues.

Understand in detail the relations between the many dimensions implicated in supporting authoritarian solutions is crucial to advance the democratic systems.

Truth Commissions (TCs) are transitional justice instances carried out to investigate human rights violations by government and/or oppositional forces. In South America, they have been carried out to help the transition from the dictatorships that ruled in many countries in the second half of the 20th century to democratic regimes (Hayner, 2011). However, the Brazilian Truth commission was long-time after the end of the dictatorship (27 years) and published its report in a context of great political crisis and distrust in institutions. Therefore, it presented a unique opportunity to study the TC impact, evaluation and their relation to the social representations of history in such contexts.

This thesis was composed of four studies. The first, investigated the public comments on major newspaper websites about the TC on the day of its final report release; the second analyzed the TC impact and evaluations in Brazil across three samples: one of undergraduate students just before the commission's report released at the end of 2014; another in 2015 with representative sample right after the report release and; the third sample, in 2017, was also representative; the third investigated the social representations of the dictatorship in Brazil and its association with psychosocial variables and; finally, in the fourth study a meta-analytical study was carried out to integrate Brazilian results about the Truth Commission impact and evaluations with the findings in the other South American countries (Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Peru) where similar researches were conducted.

The results overall showed that the evaluation of such a polemical issue as it could be to find the truth about a violent past and

construct a shared narrative about it is influenced by many different factors that operate in distinct dimensions. In his seminal work on the social representations about the psychoanalysis, Moscovici (1961/2012) defended the idea that we have to analyze at least three dimensions regarding the apprehension of a social object by common sense: the information about the object, the representational field or the images about it, and the attitudes. Not always the three dimensions show up, so that is important to analyze the context in which the representational work occurs. In Moscovici's work, although not everybody had coherent information or a clear representation about what the psychoanalysis was, everybody had an opinion about it, and that attitude was related to the social identity or to previous representations. Something similar occurred in our studies.

In the first study, we could analyze a kind of media that did not exist in the 1960s, the social media and the on-line comments on news. The TC final report release in 2014 provided an opportunity to observe people giving an opinion about a 3000 pages document (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014b), few seconds after its publication. The cognitive bias of ignoring or distorting the information that goes against our own beliefs is well documented (Festinger, 1957; Kahneman, 2011; Moscovici, 2009). A first sight could lead us to the conclusion that the opinions were clearly based on the previous representations people hold about the object; in this case the TC work which was being carried out since 2012. However, the words "Truth Commission" or "report" were not present among the ten more mentioned words in none of the classes emerging from the lexical analysis. Therefore, due to the little impact the TC seemed to have in

that time, the comments seems to reveal that the opinions were anchored in broader representations about those related to the TC, namely the president Dilma Rousseff, her party and the previous representations about the military regime.

Surely, the results of this first study with internet users who comment on the news are not generalizable. However, it provides some insights to analyze how minority influence (Moscovici, 2011) occurs in the age of social media. Comparing these results to those found in the other studies of the thesis, we could found evidence to support the idea that people comment on the news are more radicalized and oppositional to the subject than the general population. Nonetheless, if they represent the main minority influence on this topic, they could indicate a direction of change for social representation. We also found resonance of the first comments on the news comments as well as an almost absence of comments which opposed the general trend, which might indicate that a spiral of silence (Liu & Fahmy, 2011; Noelle-Neumann, 1974) could have occurred.

In the second study, we could confirm that few people were really informed and participative on the TC activities, although many had heard about it. This is a common trend in South American Truth Commissions (Arnosó et al., 2015; Cárdenas et al., 2016). Moreover, in Brazil some contextual features may contribute to the little impact of the TC: the comparative less impact of the violence in Brazil; the time elapsed between the end of the dictatorship and the TC work, and the absence of trials through an Amnesty Law (see Hayner, 2011 for comparisons among the different TCs around the world). Moreover, even those who lived during the dictatorship did not present much

more information and participation than younger participants. In this sense, it is worth to note the low level of urbanization and literacy Brazil had in that time (IBGE, 2019a, 2019b)○.

Despite that, participants in the three samples evaluated the TC work positively and considered it as quite effective. These results seem to indicate that most of participants present a positive attitude towards transitional justice even with little knowledge about it. The positive attitude towards remembering seems to confirm this idea. That might mean that the attitude towards this object is by default positive when people heard about it the first time. The sense of justice, in this case, may prevail against forgetting. Therefore, negative attitudes about the TC work probably are constructed based on positive representations about the past. One of the main objectives of the TCs is to create an integrative history about the past. In study 1, we have found evidence points out to revisionist theories about the past, which could be rising in Brazil.

Therefore, we also investigated the social representations of the military regime comparing it with a previous study conducted in the 2000s (Sá et al., 2009). We also analyzed the associations of psychosocial variables to the social representations of history. The results showed that the social representations of the military regime in Brazil seem to be still critical. However, it seems to be in transformation to a representation of the military regime that considers that were some positive aspects such as order, respect, and safeness.

However, we found evidence that some people were silence themselves, not mentioning words about the military regime. Based on the associations of not mentioning words with conservative political

opinions, belief in violence as a means of social change and TC negative evaluation, we could conclude that those who silence themselves were mostly those who hold positive social representations about the military regime. This might reveal a mute zone on the social representations about the past in Brazil. That means, representing positively the military regime is perceived as a counter-normative position that should be silenced.

Further studies following the transformation of the social representations of the military regime in Brazil would present an opportunity to investigate how the social representations of history can change following the current political climate and ideas. The overall negative representations about the military regime could change in the near future given that the current president Jair Bolsonaro is a clear advocator of the military regime and he is very critical against the TC work (G1, 2019b). Transformations on the social representations of an object are usually studied from the minority influence of powerless groups. We found evidence that the positive representations about the military regime expressed in news comments in study 1 remained minority in studies 2 (the TC was well evaluated across three samples) and 3 (negative representations of the military regime was majority). Thus, it would be very interesting to investigate the transformations on the social representations of the military regime now that an official authority supports a counter-normative position. Further studies may also relate these representations with factual knowledge about the past or to the social representations about the current political system.

Although these results present a picture of a moment, we could provide some evidence of the intertwined dimensions of information,

attitudes, emotions, socio-emotional climate, and social representations. The social representations are in constant change and studying it is quite a difficult challenge. However, Above all, we should not take people for granted. We are all incoherent, emotional and malleable. We all have different life stories and positions which impact our representation of social issues. The main contribution of this thesis may be less the picture that was taken (which is important) but to shed some light pointing out how these different dimensions interact with each other and how the social context could moderate these interactions.

We also found evidence that supports the idea that conservative political opinion, older age, and low education is related to positive social representations about the authoritarian past. That means the positive representations of the past are probably related to both, the absence of information about the violations (through education) and ideological distance to the victims. Explanations for the associations of age with positive representations about the regime include: 1. those who grew up during the regime were exposed to its propaganda justifying more authoritarian solutions than those born in democracy; 2. they were not educated in the democratic period. Thus they did not have the same access to information about the violations committed by the regime as younger people (Bezerra, 2017); 3. Elders are usually less educated than younger (IBGE, 2019a).

Moreover, we provided a first glance for the relations of other psychosocial variables on holding positive social representations about an authoritarian past. Specifically, we found that belief in violence as a means of social change is also a variable associated with positive

emotions regarding the authoritarian regime. Therefore, our study provides support for the idea that support of authoritarianism is an important variable to take into account when analyzing the social representations of history (Carvacho et al., 2013; Napier & Jost, 2008). Further studies about the relations between the social representations of the democratic system and social representations of authoritarian past would be interesting. Moreover, future studies may analyze the political knowledge and engagement and its relation with social representations of history given we found evidence that trust in institutions and information about the past are significantly associated with feeling negative emotions about the authoritarian past.

Finally, we found evidence that the social representations of history are related to the current support of authoritarian solutions. Moreover, these associations were found controlling the effects of education, age, and political opinions. Although it is true that most of those who hold positive social representations about the authoritarian past are conservative, elder or low educated; these positive representations alongside with the belief in violence as a means of social change are the main variables explaining the current support for an authoritarian solution. The support of authoritarianism are usually explained by the contexts of social crisis (Georgiadou et al., 2018) or a cultural shift based on resentment with the globalization process (Inglehart & Norris, 2016; Norris & Inglehart, 2019). Our study provided support for the idea that the social support of authoritarianism may also be associated with social representations of history may also be analyzed at least in societies which were ruled by dictatorships.

Social representations about current and past politics seem to influence one another. Theoretically, we understand that social representations function as a tool to understand the social world (Moscovici, 2009). Therefore, the social representations of history justifying past human rights violations could anchor the current support of authoritarianism. Indeed, studies have shown that narratives about the past are constantly used to justify current positions (Hilton & Liu, 2017; Liu & Hilton, 2005; J. Liu et al., 2014). Surely we could not draw causal explanations from correlational designs. Current support of authoritarianism may also influence the construction of social representations about an authoritarian past. That seems to be a less explored field than the uses of the past and may represent a possibility for future researches. The main problem in analyzing the social representations of history could be comparing the different social contexts. Our studies provided evidence about Brazilian case. In the fourth study, we tried to integrate some of the findings with those from other South American countries.

The meta-analytical study provided more evidence of the importance of the social contexts in the TC impact and evaluations. Globally, we found evidence that the perception of effectiveness of the TCs is related to having information about it, to the emotions elicited by it, to the social sharing about the past, to the attitudes towards learning from the past and against the use of political violence. Moreover, we found that the evaluation of TCs as effective is associated with more trust in institutions and a positive socio-emotional climate. Age and political positioning were found to have limited importance in evaluating TCs effectiveness, trust in institutions

and political climate despite being associated with most of the TC variables.

Although finding consistent effects across the countries, our study also showed that most of the associations are moderated by contextual factors such as the local perception of democracy as well as the support of it, level of violence in the past, the time elapsed between the end of the violence and the TC as well as the political orientation of the government which established the TC.

Through the four studies of the thesis, we have observed the complexity of the analysis of a TC impact on the social representations of history. We have to integrate many sides of this issue, each of them presenting peculiarities and relations to many social phenomena. Respect the TC impact, there are many contextual factors in the past or in the current context which can influence it. For instance, the level of past violence, the existence or absence of trials, the time elapsed between the end of the dictatorship and the TC work, the current social context of support of TC activities or democracy. Regarding the social representations of history, many different psychosocial variables may be related to different social representations. Understanding the ways people represent and justify an authoritarian past is paramount to the strengthening of new democratic systems. It is no use to discover and diffuse the truth about the past violations if people do not believe them or if they justified it as necessary given the circumstances. If we do not understand why we moved on from the old authoritarian system to a new democratic one, then we are always threatened to repeat the past mistakes. Therefore, new paths of research and education seem not

only to diffuse the factual truth about the past but to make clear the lessons learned and not to be repeated.



References

“ Brasil : ame-o ou deixe-o” (Brazil: love it or leave it) was a national slogan used by the regime during the dictatorship. Love it meaning to accept and collaborate with the regime and leave it referring to those who were not willing to do that, many of them in exile or “disappeared”.

The 1970 Football World Cup Brazil won was used to exalt the nation proud in the most oppressive period of the regime.

“Pra frente Brasil!”(Go ahead, Brazil!) and “Ninguém segura este país” (Nobody can stop this country) are examples of the nationalistic euphoria during this period.

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CENSURA LENDO O MATERIAL DO PASQUIM.

Appendices

“The censorship reading ‘O pasquim’”

The humor was one of the main ways to challenge the regime. Sometimes directly, sometimes metaphorically, the cartoons were very popular.

“O Pasquim” was a magazine that represented a great symbol of resistance through satire.

Many cartoonists, such as Millôr Fernandes, were arrested and the magazines collected, but their art remained in people’s minds.

**This thesis is a humble tribute to those who silently laugh at the dictators
around the world.**

Guiar-se pelos valores tradicionais ainda é a maneira mais adequada de viver.						
Discordo						Concordo
Totalmente						Totalmente
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

As leis de Deus sobre o aborto, a pornografia e o matrimônio deveriam ser estritamente seguidas antes que seja demasiado tarde. As violações destas leis devem ser castigadas.						
Discordo						Concordo
Totalmente						Totalmente
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

A sociedade necessita mostrar abertura para com as pessoas que pensam de forma diferente.						
Discordo						Concordo
Totalmente						Totalmente
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Seria melhor que os jornais fossem censurados, para que as pessoas não possam ter acesso à informação destrutiva, perturbadora ou repugnante.						
Discordo						Concordo
Totalmente						Totalmente
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Há muita gente radical e imoral tentando arruinar as coisas. A sociedade deveria detê-los.						
Discordo						Concordo
Totalmente						Totalmente
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Os fatos mostram que devemos atuar mais duramente contra o crime e a imoralidade sexual com o fim de manter a lei e a ordem.						
Discordo						Concordo
Totalmente						Totalmente
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Às vezes é necessário usar a violência para alcançar a mudança na sociedade.			
Discordo Totalmente			Concordo Totalmente
1	2	3	4

Por favor, responda as seguintes perguntas sobre o Regime Militar (1964-1985):

Você já teve alguma informação sobre o período do governo militar de 1964 a 1985?	
<input type="checkbox"/> SIM	<input type="checkbox"/> NÃO

Em caso de ter respondido SIM, onde conseguiu essa informação?		
	Sim	Não
Na escola		
Na universidade		
Relatos de familiares e amigos		
Na mídia		

Escreva as três primeiras palavras que lhe vêm à mente quando se fala em “Regime Militar”:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Quando pensa no Regime Militar você sente:							
	Nada						Muito
Tristeza, dor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Culpa, arrependimento	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ira, irritação, incômodo, perturbação	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Medo, ansiedade, estresse	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Vergonha, humilhação, desonra	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Esperança, otimismo, ânimo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Alegria, prazer, felicidade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Orgulho, confiança, segurança em si mesma(o)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Você acha que houve aspectos positivos do período do regime militar?	
<input type="checkbox"/> SIM	<input type="checkbox"/> NÃO

Você considera que na época do regime militar houve violações de Direitos Humanos?	
<input type="checkbox"/> SIM	<input type="checkbox"/> NÃO

Algum caso de violação dos Direitos Humanos foi justificado?	
<input type="checkbox"/> SIM	<input type="checkbox"/> NÃO

Você se considera uma vítima de violência, entre os anos de 1964 e 1985, por parte do governo ou de seus agentes (polícia, forças armadas ou órgãos de segurança)?

SIM NÃO

Em caso de ter respondido SIM, em qual dos aspectos que seguem?

Exoneração Prisão Tortura Exílio

Outros: _____

Há vítimas de violência, entre os anos de 1964 e 1985, por parte do governo ou seus agentes (polícia, forças armadas ou órgãos de segurança) entre seus familiares ou amigos próximos?

SIM NÃO

Em caso de ter respondido SIM, em qual dos aspectos que seguem?

Exoneração Prisão Tortura Exílio Executado

Outros: _____

Você tem falado acerca da época de violência (1964-1985)?

Nada	Pouco	Muito	Muitíssimo
1	2	3	4

Você tem sentido a necessidade de falar sobre os acontecimentos que ocorreram durante o período de violência (1964-1985)?

Nada	Pouco	Muito	Muitíssimo
1	2	3	4

Existe algum aspecto da violência (1964-1985) do qual não queira falar jamais?

Nada	Pouco	Muito	Muitíssimo
1	2	3	4

Você acredita que as pessoas afetadas pela violência podem perdoar aos que lhes causaram dano (individual ou grupal)?						
De nenhuma forma						Totalmente
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Para continuar, gostaríamos de saber sobre sua participação na Comissão Nacional da Verdade e sua opinião sobre as principais atividades, ações e conclusões.

Você tem conhecimento sobre o trabalho da Comissão Nacional da Verdade (CNV) iniciada em 2012 e concluída em 2014?
<input type="checkbox"/> SIM <input type="checkbox"/> NÃO

Quanta informação você diria que possui sobre a Comissão Nacional da Verdade?
Pouquíssima Pouca Moderada Muita Muitíssima
1 2 3 4 5

Deu testemunho na Comissão Nacional da Verdade ou em alguma outra comissão de verdade?
<input type="checkbox"/> SIM <input type="checkbox"/> NÃO

(Faça um círculo em frente a cada frase, no número correspondente à opção que lhe pareça que melhor representa sua opinião)	Nada	Pouco	Muito	Muitíssimo
Viu as audiências da Comissão Nacional da Verdade na televisão/internet ou visto as informações nas notícias	1	2	3	4
Escutou as audiências ou informações no rádio que se referem à Comissão Nacional da Verdade	1	2	3	4
Leu sobre a Comissão Nacional da Verdade nos jornais, nas revistas ou em livros	1	2	3	4
Leu os relatórios da Comissão Nacional da Verdade (ou parte destes)	1	2	3	4
Participou de rituais religiosos ou comemorações das vítimas (missas, funerais, velórios ou outras atividades religiosas)	1	2	3	4
Participou de atividades simbólicas de recordação das vítimas (concentrações, marchas, mobilizações não religiosas)	1	2	3	4
Participou de atividades de organizações dos Direitos Humanos	1	2	3	4
Participou nas atividades de organizações de familiares de pessoas afetadas	1	2	3	4
Falou sobre a Comissão Nacional da Verdade com outras pessoas	1	2	3	4

A seguir, apresentamos um resumo sobre a Comissão Nacional da Verdade. Por favor, leia e responda as perguntas a seguir:

A Comissão Nacional da Verdade foi criada no ano de 2011 e instituída em 16 de maio de 2012. A CNV tem por finalidade apurar graves violações de Direitos Humanos ocorridas durante os governos militares entre 18 de setembro de 1964 e 5 de outubro de 1988 (com ênfase no período entre 1964 e 1985). Seu mandato inicial foi até 2013, mas recebeu uma prorrogação até dezembro de 2014, momento em que entregou seu relatório final. O relatório final lista os responsáveis pela repressão política e estabelece que os atos de violência produzidos pelo governo militar no Brasil deixaram um total de 434 mortos ou desaparecidos, entre outras práticas reconhecidas de violações de Direitos Humanos. Assim como a relação dos locais onde ocorriam as práticas de tortura, interrogatórios forçados, prisões ilegais e desaparecimentos de pessoas. Fonte: Comissão Nacional da Verdade.

A respeito do que a Comissão Nacional da Verdade tem feito, você diria que:			
Desaprova Fortemente 1	Desaprova 2	Aprova 3	Aprova Fortemente 4

Você tem falado mais sobre a época do regime militar (1964-1985) depois da criação da Comissão Nacional da Verdade?			
Nada 1	Pouco 2	Muito 3	Muitíssimo 4

Você diria que a Comissão Nacional da Verdade está ajudando as famílias das vítimas a saber o que ocorreu aos seus entes queridos?			
Nada 1	Pouco 2	Muito 3	Muitíssimo 4

Você acredita que a Comissão Nacional da Verdade está ajudando a criar, na sociedade brasileira, uma história que incorpora de forma harmoniosa os relatos dos diversos grupos envolvidos nas lutas do Regime Militar (1964-1985)?			
Nada 1	Pouco 2	Muito 3	Muitíssimo 4

Você acredita que a Comissão Nacional da Verdade está ajudando a garantir que as violações dos Direitos Humanos não voltarão a acontecer no país?			
Nada 1	Pouco 2	Muito 3	Muitíssimo 4

Quando pensa nos resultados dos relatórios da Comissão Nacional da Verdade você sente:							
	Nada						Muito
Tristeza, dor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Culpa, arrependimento	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ira, irritação, incômodo, perturbação	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Medo, ansiedade, estresse	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Vergonha, humilhação, desonra	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Esperança, otimismo, ânimo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Alegria, prazer, felicidade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Orgulho, confiança, segurança em si mesmo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Por favor, leia o seguinte e responda as perguntas a seguir:

Durante a cerimônia de entrega do relatório final da Comissão Nacional da Verdade, a presidente Dilma Rousseff se emocionou e chorou ao fazer referência aos brasileiros que perderam parentes e amigos no combate à ditadura. A presidente expressou, em seu discurso, que o relatório final ajuda o Brasil a “se reconciliar consigo mesmo” após as duas décadas de regime militar. “Estou certa de que os trabalhos produzidos pela comissão resultam do esforço pela procura da verdade, respeito da verdade histórica e estímulo da reconciliação do país consigo mesmo, por meio da verdade e do conhecimento”. A presidente disse ainda que ter acesso à verdade não significa “revanchismo”. “A verdade faz com que agora tudo possa ser dito, explicado e sabido. A verdade significa a oportunidade de fazer o encontro de nós mesmos com nossa história e do povo com a sua história”, disse. “Mereciam a verdade aqueles que continuam sofrendo como se morressem de novo, e sempre, a cada dia”.

Fonte: <http://g1.globo.com/politica/noticia/2014/12/dilma-chora-ao-receber-relatorio-final-da-comissao-da-verdade.html>

Você crê que as declarações da presidente Dilma Rousseff foram sinceras?			
Nada	Pouco	Muito	Muitíssimo
1	2	3	4

Você acredita que estas declarações serviram para ajudar a sociedade a compreender o sofrimento dos grupos afetados?			
Nada	Pouco	Muito	Muitíssimo
1	2	3	4

Você acredita que estas declarações serviram para melhorar a relação e promover a confiança entre os diferentes grupos em conflito?			
Nada	Pouco	Muito	Muitíssimo
1	2	3	4

Pode-se contar a história do Brasil de muitas maneiras diferentes. Interessa-nos sua opinião sobre as seguintes declarações sobre o passado do Brasil. Por favor, indique em que medida você considera as seguintes declarações verdadeiras:

Quando se trata do passado do país, devemos aprender com os erros cometidos a fim de evitar cometer os mesmo erros novamente			
Totalmente falsa	Provavelmente é falsa	Provavelmente é verdadeira	Totalmente verdadeira
1	2	3	4

É melhor que não se abram velhas feridas falando do que aconteceu no passado			
Totalmente falsa	Provavelmente é falsa	Provavelmente é verdadeira	Totalmente verdadeira
1	2	3	4

Em que medida você acredita que as seguintes situações são verdadeiras hoje em dia no Brasil? Por favor, assinale com um círculo a resposta que melhor corresponder:

A maioria das pessoas sente confiança de que há e haverá suficiente comida, água, medicamentos e habitações para eles e suas famílias, tanto no presente como no futuro?						
Nada						Completamente
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

As pessoas se sentem inseguras devido ao grau de violência existente que não permite que as pessoas vivam em paz?						
Nada						Completamente
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

As pessoas sentem que os diferentes grupos políticos têm suficiente confiança entre eles para trabalhar conjuntamente em favor do bem-estar do país?						
Nada						Completamente
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

As pessoas sentem medo de reunir-se publicamente para falar, organizar-se ou para protestar pacificamente?						
Nada						Completamente
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

As pessoas sentem esperança pois as coisas no Brasil estão melhorando?						
Nada						Completamente
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Os diversos grupos políticos, étnicos e religiosos do Brasil sentem confiança entre si?						
Nada						Completamente
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

As pessoas têm medo de dizer o que realmente pensam pois “falar em voz alta” é perigoso						
Nada						Completamente
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

A desesperança neste país é tanta que muita gente quer ir embora?						
Nada						Completamente
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

O ambiente ou clima social do país é de:							
	Nada						Completamente
Solidariedade, ajuda mútua	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Confiança nas instituições	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Raiva, hostilidade, agressividade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Tristeza, passividade, baixo estado de ânimo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Por favor, dê-nos sua opinião sobre alguns assuntos que são frequentemente tema de debate no Brasil:		
	A Favor	Contra
Direitos Humanos		
Pena de morte		
Redução da maioria penal		
Volta do Regime Militar		
Legalização do Aborto		
Casamento entre pessoas do mesmo sexo		
Legalização da maconha		

Para continuar, apresentamos-lhe uma série de instituições. Diga-nos, por favor, seu grau de confiança em cada uma delas.

	Nenhuma confiança	Pouca confiança	Moderada confiança	Muita confiança
Polícia Militar	1	2	3	4
Partidos políticos em geral	1	2	3	4
Governos regionais (Estado)	1	2	3	4
Governos locais (Município)	1	2	3	4
Poder Executivo (Presidente, Ministros)	1	2	3	4
Poder Legislativo (Congresso da República)	1	2	3	4
Poder Judiciário (Juizes)	1	2	3	4
Forças Armadas	1	2	3	4
Igreja	1	2	3	4

Muito obrigado pela sua participação!